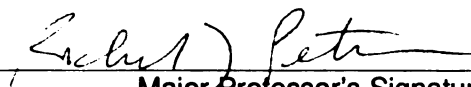This is to certify that the
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AN ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNT OF STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

By

Kenneth Alwyn Parsons

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

AN ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNT OF STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

By

Kenneth Alwyn Parsons

In this project, I develop an alternative account of structural violence. I am navigating between two approaches to violence. On the one hand, we have the narrow, restricted approach to violence, where violence is construed as i) direct, ii) intentional, and iii) forceful acts done by particular agents to others, which cause iii) harms and injuries to those people. On the other hand, Johan Galtung develops an extended approach to violence which overcomes the limitations of this restrictive approach by recognizing and theorizing violence outside of intentional, direct activity. He defines violence as *avoidable impediments and obstacles blocking people from actualizing their own potential realizations.*

Given the overly broad scope of Galtung's conception of violence, his mechanistic account of the relationship between structures and human activity, and his reduction of structural violence to distributions of power, I formulate an alternative approach to structural violence. First, I retain a link to restrictive approaches – emphasizing violence as bodily harm and injury – which provides us with a clear target for political action designed

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to recognize and confront relations of violence while also relying upon an understanding of violence beyond direct, intentional activity. Second, I develop a dialectical understanding of the relationship between social structures and human activity, whereby the quality of agency of subordinate and dominant groups affects those social structures organizing social activity. Structures are the outcomes of antagonistic relations (e.g. contemporary organization of capitalist labor relations are shaped by historical conflicts and struggles). While structures condition, shape, constrain, or block certain kinds of social activity we can also recognize, unlike Galtung, that the choices and actions of subordinate groups in turn affects the very organizations of relations themselves. Depending upon the degree of self-conscious, collectively organized activity designed to meet the interests of subordinate groups, these groups can change and resist structural arrangements which do not serve their interests. Third, rejecting Galtung's understanding of power as a resource, the exercise of power by particular groups does in certain instances block or make possible, or highly likely, outcomes of violence. Also, violence functions as a precondition or instrument for the exercise of power. In order to clarify this relationship, I detail the distinct, but nevertheless close, interrelationships between exploitation, domination and structural violence.

work through many stages of revisions. Finally, I owe gratitude to those who continue to struggle for social justice and inspired me to keep political praxis central within my philosophical work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Introduction: Restricted and Broad Approaches to Violence

Philosophers must focus more on the multi-dimensional reality of violence within our increasingly globalized social, political and economic orders. Despite a "long century of violence"[1] – rapid proliferation of the instruments of mass violence, the increasingly complex organization and accelerated deployment of the forces of violence, and the widespread mediazation of violence over the the last three decades alone – our theoretical understanding and articulation of violence itself has progressed much more slowly. We must be mindful of how our philosophical discourses themselves promote or impede our understanding the avoidable, socially-caused harms and injuries that permeate contemporary life. A rigorous critique of our standard philosophical discourses on violence is in order. Those discourses which obscure the realities of violence by an overly narrow understanding of violence or which overemphasize one particular understanding of violence and apply it to all manifestations of violence should be thoroughly challenged and reworked. The reality that the victims of violence experience in today's world is underappreciated and misunderstood, in part because of the ways that our academic and non-

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1 Keane, John. *Reflections on Violence*, London: Verso, 1996, p. 3.

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academic discourses circumscribe debates and discussions about these experiences of violence.

I will argue that a large part of the philosophical and political discussions on violence obscure or ignore the realities of violence within basic economic and political relations of power, specifically as they relate to the spread of capitalist globalization. Even when violence is recognized in the context of these basic power relations (i.e. troops protecting capital interests, work related injury and death), the scope of such violence is still too narrowly construed as direct activity done by particular identifiable individuals. Furthermore, the critical evaluation of violence, especially in relation to other key political concepts like domination and exploitation (i.e. the justified and unjustified uses of instruments of violence by those in dominant position of power), either overemphasizes the extreme degree of domination and exploitation, thereby deeming it violence, or underappreciates the close but distinctive relationship that is shared between domination, exploitation and violence. Given such narrow conceptions of violence in analytic and normative terms, violence is reduced to physical acts that are morally objectionable. I agree with those theorists who argue that we ought to maintain a clear relationship between bodily harm and violence at an analytic level, and a clear distinction between

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justified (e.g. self-defense) and unjustified (e.g. hate crime killings) forms of violence at a normative level. However, given the narrowness of this approach to violence, there are a host of cases of violence which are excluded and untheorized.

I will also argue that some theorists extend violence to include any "social undesirability" or "needs deprivation." This extension of our understanding of violence does little to help clarify the presence of violence, to distinguish between what political phenomena is or is not plausibly called violence, and further confuses our attempts to specify targets for political action geared towards reducing violence. Against those who argue against extending violence in both analytic and normative terms (i.e. the restrictivist and narrow approaches to violence), I will argue that our understanding of the relations of violence must move beyond immediate relations of power and focus much more closely on the objective economic and political relations of power that are directly related to enduring relations of violence. Before elaborating the details and distinctiveness of my project which takes us beyond narrow and restricted conceptions of violence and before I specifically explain and address a select few traditional theorists of violence in chapter one, I will briefly peruse and outline these traditional philosophical approaches to violence.

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Contemporary history of the concept of violence within political philosophy

Following the death of millions within two world wars and countless deaths within industrialized productive relations, research into the causes, motivations and effects of political and economic violence increased considerably. With media and political attention paid to U.S. and European social movements, nuclear proliferation, and increased U.S./European awareness and involvement in international conflicts between a great number of small nations following World War II, particularly with regard to the wars and conflicts in Southeast Asia and Central America, in the following years an unprecedented amount of philosophical reflection and debate arose addressing the nature and justification(s) of violence. As a result of specific developments and events within this historical time period (e.g. the rise in civil disobedience and militant nonviolence with Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., the rise of the Black Power movement and other so-called violent revolutionary groups, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, CIA orchestrated and led coup détats in Central and South America), the question and problem of violence took on a new urgency for political philosophers.

Furthermore, with an increase of the presence and availability of

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media coverage that devoted itself to the contradictory glamorization and demonization of violence, the dramatic and bloody experiences of others on the TV and in the newspapers showed not only how voyeuristically attractive violence was to the U.S. public, but how difficult it was to understand who actually perpetuated and caused violence and who were actually the victims themselves of violence. When black marchers are shown to the world being violently ripped up by police dogs in a 1963 Birmingham demonstration, it was a gruesome site. Add to this situation two competing facts: first, the dogs were on leashes and were allowed, even guided, to repeatedly attack these black citizens who resisted demands of the police; second, the Civil Rights demonstrators themselves were publicly committed *not* to spread violence through their acts of resistance. Within such a highly charged and deliberately constructed moral struggle over the justified and unjustified uses of state and citizen violence and nonviolence, violence as a relatively stable and categorizable concept became highly confused and muddled. Given such kinds confrontations dramatized by the media throughout the 1960's, all sides of these struggles fought to clarify who exactly was responsible for the eruption of violence (i.e. who caused or provoked the outbreak of violence at lunch counters, bus rides or street marches, who was responsible for "escalating" the conflict to the level of

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violence, etc.) and who in fact were actually violent. Not only were

rhetorical statements being made in the press about violence which

clouded moral and political judgments of non-participants, but basic

understandings of what it meant to be responsible for and complicit in acts

of violence were also brought into direct focus.

In view of all these developments – conflicts over Civil Rights of the

1950's and 1960's and, given the role of the media, the changing historical

perceptions about, and the increased challenges to, the reality and

legitimacy of state violence, and the rise of those who claim to struggle and

engage in political conflict *without* violence – philosophers and political

theorists have been forced to revisit and revise traditional analytic and

normative assumptions about violence. Considering our contemporary

situation, the complex institutional reorganization of the relations and

instruments of violence (i.e. cooperation between the military, police, and

private security personnel for domestic and international "security

campaigns" in our "post-9/11" world), whether it is for the so-called "war on

terrorism" or for controlling and suppressing domestic and international

dissent against governmental policies and actions, substantially challenges

the distinctions and interconnections we make between different forms of

violence.

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Within these contexts of attention to and experience of violence itself over the last 60 years, the choice of illustrations to focus upon within an analysis of violence further testifies to the orientation that philosophers have when considering what is and what is not violence itself. State terrorism, terrorist acts against the state or civilians, rape as a weapon of war, rape as a form of terrorism, robberies involving murder, domestic violence and physical abuse, property destruction by protesters and looters, unjust aggressions and genocides of dictatorial regimes (e.g. Milosevic, Suharto, and Pinochet), intergang warfare and street crime, intragang initiations, suicide bombings, mass suicides for religious purposes, the racist and homophobic murders of numerous persons like James Baker and Matthew Shepard – these are all examples which have arisen within the context of political philosophy discussions on violence. Violence is readily apparent and obvious in these examples. It is the primary reason why we react and identify with the horror of these situations. Whereas the attribution of violence to these situations may be disputed by those who use and perpetuate it, the vast majority of us outside of these situations and relations see these "textbook cases" as relatively indisputable. If the reality of violence were only limited to such anomalies, such actions and events outside of the normal course of life, then in order to understand and

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reduce violence, we need only look to those incidents where the ordinary or usual situation breaks down and becomes "uncivil,"[2] and find ways to suppress, redirect, stop, and/or punish such acts in order to restore peace and order.

If such approaches were sufficient, then violence would not be the pervasive phenomenon it is and has been throughout the 20th and into the 21st centuries. In order to adequately address the phenomenon of violence within political theory, we must recognize how these harms and injuries are manifested within social life. As a result of the closer political and economic relationships between national and international actors and groups today, our very understanding and evaluation of violence must be thoroughly revised. We cannot simply work from previous approaches to violence, as many philosophers still do. As I will show in the first part of this project, violence is much more complex and unlocalizable. The violence tied to the organization of political-economic relations of power (i.e. domestic mobilization of military forces for the domestic and international security of capital investment) is as much a reality as the murdering of innocent bystanders within the context of an immediate

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2   Keane and Balibar both make use of this term to refer to societies where the nonviolent and democratic procedures of civil society breakdown and actors resort to the use of violence in order to change political affairs and outcomes. See Balibar's book *Politics and the Other Scene*. Translated by Daniel Hahn, London: Verso, 2002.

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violent conflict despite the apparent lack of force, aggression and coercion of human actors. We must recognize how the complexity of social relations masks, subverts, facilitates or blocks the effects of their actions. We must move beyond simple characterizations of the reality of violence and analyze its effects, its causes, its relationship with other social phenomena within the context of specific relations of power. In order to illustrate our need to move beyond these narrow and restricted approaches, the detailed example to follow on the ubiquity and pervasiveness of violence in Colombia shows that we must adopt a broader analytic and more complex normative approach to violence within political theory. Given the complexity of violence within Colombia (among other places around the globe), this example will demonstrate why traditional views of violence are too simple and narrow to be useful for political theorists of violence.

Colombia's Multi-dimensional reality of violence

Consider the reality of violence in Colombia throughout the 20th century and into the foreseeable future of the 21st century. In a situation today where the military, paramilitaries and rebel groups fight against one another, there is constant news of murders, kidnappings, tortures,

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beatings, intimidations and threats. Not only are there direct conflicts

fought between these groups that end in great numbers of deaths, there are

also continual civilian casualties caused by all sides of the conflict.

According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, "It is typical of the conflict in

Colombia that it is the armed parties in the conflict – the army, the

extremist right-wing paramilitary groups and the left-oriented guerrilla

groups – that are exercising violence against unarmed civilians suspected

of supporting the enemy."[3] For every five union leaders or supporters

assassinated anywhere in the world, three of them are Colombian

unionists. Since 1986, around 3,800 unionists have been killed, many with

signs placed on their corpses, listing the reasons why they were murdered.

In 2001, 184 were killed.[4] Fifty-two of the 172 unionists killed in 2002 were

teachers. In the first two months of 2003, nine had been killed.

Unfortunately these numbers do not include the murders of other unarmed

civilians – farmers, humanitarian workers, media personnel, and public

employees. As is now widely known and publicized by the U.S. State

Department, the International Labor Organization and the Colombian

Committee of Jurists, a large majority of paramilitary violence – in terms

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3   http://www.nrc.no/NRC/eng/programmes/Colombia.htm.
4   National Mobilization on Colombia- http://www.colombiamobilization.org/article.php?id=37; Central
    Trade Union Federation of Colombia (CUT) also confirms these numbers.

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of assassinations, bombings, and torture- is overwhelmingly tolerated and

even directly sponsored by the Colombian government and military. As the

third largest recipient in 2003 of U.S. Military aid (Israel and Egypt being

the first two respectively), Colombian military forces receive continuous

training and an increasing number of U.S. "military advisers" and contract-

hired soldiers/mercenaries (typically retired U.S. personnel). In 2002,

George W. Bush asked the U.S. Congress for "$98 million in the 2003

budget to train, arm and provide air support for Colombian troops to

defend the Caño Limon pipeline."[5] Already, Congress has approved most of

the requested funds and are slated to include more.

> Congress allowed the administration to provide Colombia with $93 million in
> Foreign Military Financing (FMF) to help its army protect the Caño Limón-Coveñas
> pipeline in the department of Arauca. Colombia would get another $1.2 million in
> International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding.[6]

Unlike paramilitary violence which tends to be murders and

assassinations, rebel groups – the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

(FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN) – are responsible for the vast

majority of kidnappings and sabotage bombings of government and

corporate leaders and supporters. While many farmers and workers are

killed for supporting rebel groups, the FARC and ELN also intimidate and

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5   *San Francisco Chronicle*, Saturday, February 16, 2002.
6   The Center for International Policy's *Colombia Project*, FY 2003 Congressional Budget Justification
    for Foreign Operations (http://www.state.gov/m/rm/rls/cbj/2003), and FY 2003 International Affairs
    (Function 150) Budget Request Summary and Highlights (http://www.state.gov/m/rm/rls/iab/2003).

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kill noncombatants in order to gain territorial control or to coercively recruit new forces. These groups also directly target and threaten the economic interests of wealthy elites. Given their continuous attacks on oil pipelines, ten to fifteen percent of Colombia's military troops are said to be deployed in and around these key zones. According to the U.S. State Department's International Information Programs:

> In 1999 the pipeline was sabotaged 79 times, with a total of 200,000 barrels of crude oil spilled into the surrounding jungle. In less than a three-month period between July and September 2000, ELN guerrillas launched 22 attacks on the pipeline with an overall spillage of 150,000 barrels. Some of the attacks on the Caño Limon pipeline have led to spilled crude oil flowing down rivers and across the border into Venezuela.[7]

We can see then that the production and distribution of oil is a major concern for the wealthy elites, particularly for the U.S. based corporation Occidental and the Colombian oil corporation Ecopetrol. There is ample evidence – even statements made directly by Occidental – that both paramilitaries and rebel groups have received large financial payoffs from large corporations, for protection from potential and actual attacks.

In addition to direct violence against persons, we find a large amount of environmental destruction and violence done by many sides of this conflict. Along with the 1,000+ bombings of oil pipelines, resulting in around 2.2 million gallons of spilled oil all over Colombia (almost 10 times

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7   http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/andes/pipe.htm.

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that of the Exxon Valdez), the fumigation and eradication of crops by

cropdusters is also a major source of ecological violence. While the media

and politicians typically focus on the killings and kidnappings, the vast

majority of Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Venezuelan people are effected

through a contamination of their water, food and air. In an attempt to

eradicate the importation of cocaine and heroin to the U.S., the Colombian

government sprays fields with herbicide in hopes of killing any plant life,

thus making it difficult, if not impossible, for farmers to grow poppies. Paul

E. Simons, the acting Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and

Law Enforcement Affairs, states that "...in 2002, we have sprayed 3,263

hectares of poppy, and hope to reach the year-end goal of spraying 5,000

hectares of poppy." Overall, around 40,000 hectares have been fumigated

either by aerial or other means. According to the Colombian group

Pesticide Action Network,

> for every acre fumigated, it is estimated that three acres of rainforest are cut down,
> as the coca growers are pushed into more remote areas. This deforestation and the
> defoliation resulting from spraying causes a loss of habitat for all species, increased
> fragmentation of intact forests, soil erosion, and degradation of streams and rivers.[8]

Since the U.S. rigorously stepped up its funding of aerial fumigation in

December 2000, it is becoming increasingly difficult for ordinary persons to

gain access to clean water and farmable land. Given such widespread use

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8   http://home.earthlink.net/~alto/Plan_Colombia.html.

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of these toxic herbicides – ironically produced by U.S. based Monsanto

(Roundup SL) and yet are banned in the U.S. – the landscapes of large

portions of Northern South America are being irreversibly altered. Since

1996, one million people, mostly Afro-Colombians, have been displaced

either in search of land or to flee conflict-ridden zones. "Most of the

displaced are poor rural people forced or terrorized into abandoning their

land, or townspeople who were targeted because of their involvement with

the government, unions, worker's cooperatives, or social activism..."[9]

Another increasingly common reason for displacement is the removal

of populations, either by direct paramilitary threats or actions, military

force or economic coercion. Once removed, multinational corporations are

attracted to accumulate these large landholdings in order to secure

government contracts for building, construction and mining. Uraba and

Riosucio, respectively the main banana growing regions and ideal areas for

mining and canal projects, were once occupied by large populations of Afro-

Colombians and various indigenous groups. According to USCR and

FEDES,

> The contribution of large projects of economic investment to the increase of the
> displaced population is quite significant... The most recent case is the forced

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9 U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR), *Colombia's Silent Crisis: One Million Displaced by Violence.*
   Written by Hiram A. Ruiz, edited by Virgina Hamilton and produced by Koula Papanicolas,
   Immigration and Refugee Services of America, 1998, p. 4.

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displacement of approximately 500 families living in the rural parts of the municipality of Riosucio... A paramilitary group threatened to assassinate them if they didn't leave, sine public works that would bring progress to the areas were soon to be undertaken. It is important to point out that these even took place days after the government announced the approval of a project for the construction of an inter-oceanic channel...through the area.[10]

While we have not addressed the increasing exploitation of children for combat duty, the suppression, intimidation and increased violence against NGO's and human rights organizations, or the increasing starvation and disease of the poor and displaced, it is clear from our cursory look at these relations of power and violence in Colombia that violence is a part of daily life for the vast majority of Colombians. Relying upon traditional approaches to violence, the explanation of a large number of these cases is easily understood. Certain actors apply extreme amounts of force and coercion to other persons in order to kill or intimidate them. In cases of ecological violence, the object of violence is less distinctive and yet it is clear that the eradication and destruction of vegetable and animal life is done by the excessive application of toxic chemicals. The manner in which the violence is done is also quite clear. Through the use of arms, direct threats, and random acts of violence designed to terrorize populations of people, people are directly harmed and injured or killed.

However, if we study specific economic and political relations of

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10 USCR, ibid., p. 28.

power within this conflict, traditional approaches to violence do little to aid in explaining the the multi-dimensional reality of violence. In addition to the overt forms of political and ecological violence perpetuated by armed groups, we must also look at the ways that violence operates within the context of corporate domination and exploitation within Colombia. Here we find that massive harms to people are perpetuated outside of the usual immediate violent actions of armed individuals and the localized contexts of direct confrontations, coercions and threats. In these cases, there are no immediate subjects causing violence against others. Rather, given the ways that the lives of communities of people are reorganized under spreading corporate power and influence – via land acquisition, dominance within employment relations, increased taxation benefits for their "development" projects – unintended injuries and harms also multiply. As Justin Podur explains, we must tell the story of "the quiet, appalling violence that poor people live through, and would continue to live through even if all of the violence that makes Colombia famous were to suddenly disappear."[11] As the U.S. increases aid to Colombia in order to make it "peaceful and safe for business," these measures are actually increasing and complicating *La Violencia* for massive amounts of people. According to a World Bank

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11 "The Other Kind of Violence," March 2, 2003, Znet's *Colombia Watch*-
http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=9&ItemID=3166.

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Country Study entitled *Violence in Colombia: Building Sustainable Peace and Social Capital*:

> violence is **the** key development constraint. It affects the country's macro-and micro-economic growth and productivity, as well as impacting on the government's capacity to reduce the poverty, inequality and exclusion experienced by the majority of its urban and rural population.[12]

What the World Bank study fails to mention though is the ways that it and other international economic institutions are forces which exacerbate "poverty, inequality and exclusion." According to this study, there is a framework of violence that involves three specific categories: political, economic and social. Table 1 illustrates this framework:

Table 1: Framework of violence[13]

Category of Violence	Definition	Manifestation
Political	The commission of violent acts motivated by a desire, conscious or unconscious, to obtain or maintain political power.	Guerrilla conflict; paramilitary conflict; political assassinations; armed conflict between political parties.
Economic	The commission of violent acts motivated by a desire, conscious or unconscious, for economic gain or to obtain or maintain economic power.	Street crime; carjacking; robbery/theft; drug trafficking; kidnapping; assaults made during economic crimes.

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12 Introduction to *Violence in Colombia*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2000.

13 Moser, C. *A Conceptual Framework for Violence Reduction*, Latin America and Caribbean Region Sustainable Working Paper No. 2, Urban Peace Program Series, Latin America and The Caribbean Regional Office, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development SMU, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1999.

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Category of Violence	Definition	Manifestation
Social	The commission of violent acts motivated by a desire, conscious or unconscious, for social gain or to obtain or maintain social power.	Interpersonal violence, such as spouse and child abuse; sexual assault of women and children; arguments that get out of control.

From this table, three already highlighted points are readily apparent.

First, "motivated violent acts" are focused on exclusively. This framework

does recognize the "unconscious desires" of such acts, but this only serves

to individuate and atomize the actions of those in institutional positions

and roles of decision-making power. By reducing violence down to

motivated acts, this framework excludes those instances where the very

organization of social relations, deeply influenced and effected by

institutional rules and policies, produces outcomes that are likely to

include violence against persons, communities and the environment.

Second, the "Manifestations" illustrate how violence is physical and

extreme in terms of the manner in which the actions are carried out. If we

focus on those who are affected by violence, such a condition for a

"manifestation" of violence is hardly sufficient. All major humanitarian

efforts and organizations – Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International,

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Colombia Mobilization, Canada Colombia Solidarity Campaign – argue

that the primary underlying cause of increasing levels of violence in

Colombia results from the "aggressive imposition of a global economic

model which maximizes profit for legal and illegal multinational interests

and corporations."[14] With Occidental Petroleum, Exxonmobil,

Drummond/Coca-cola, Dole Food Company, CZN, Ecopetrol, BP Amoco,

and DynCorp extracting well over $10 billion a year in profits from

Colombia, it is little wonder that the vast majority of regions in Colombia

have an infrastructure geared towards large-scale production and profit

and not towards basic investment in human needs (i.e. clean water

systems, environmental cleanup from oil spills, non-industrial road

maintenance, affordable public goods like food, electricity and sewage).

According to Rachel Guevara, "More than half of all legal Colombian

exports travel to the U.S., if you add the value of cocaine and heroin, the

percentage goes to 80."[15] As the fourth largest exporter of coal, all sides of

the armed conflicts are fighting to gain territorial control over these

regions. In El Cerrejon, the Wayuu Indians have been forced off their land

and the last of the original 5,000 workers lost their jobs by 1988 for union

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14 *Minga for Life and Against Violence*, August 2001, http://tao.ca/~ccsc/enc_report.htm.
15 "The Political Economy of a Narco-Terror State: Colombia and Corporate Profits," *The Progressive Magazine*, October 2002.

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activities. Formally owned by Exxon (until April 2002), this area's water

and grasslands have dried up and the coal dust has increased respiratory

diseases among the surrounding communities, forcing even more to uproot

in hopes of finding better land and water for farming. In Cali, 16-year-old

Paola was displaced, unemployed and in need of hospital services to deliver

her baby.

> Paola delivered her child at a Cali hospital, and friends of hers scraped together
> some money to purchase clothing for the baby, as well as syringes and rubber gloves
> for the hospital staff (not provided by the hospital). One of these friends, Maria
> Eugenia, tried to register Paola. When Maria said Paola was displaced, the hospital
> staff said: sorry, but everybody says that they're displaced so they don't have to pay.
> The fee? More than $200 US, a fortune for a displaced young Colombian woman.
> When Paola's friends asked what would happen if she couldn't pay, the staff
> shrugged. It was clear that Paola and her baby wouldn't be allowed to leave the
> hospital until their bill was paid. The trouble was that the government's health
> coverage for the displaced pays the first $20 and no more, an innovation introduced
> in Colombia's latest budget.[16]

With 2.5 million people lacking adequate medical care, housing, and work,

a vast majority of Colombians are either starving, in squalid refugee camps

or are taking up arms and fighting against military and paramilitary

groups. Because such deprivations are preventable, it is clear why

humanitarian groups see the structural imperatives of neoliberalism as the

primary cause of widespread violence in Colombia. This is the third aspect

of violence – the structure or organization of basic social relations that

facilitates the perpetuation of violence – occurs in ways that the World

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16 Podur, ibid., p. 2.

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Bank study fails to include within its categorizations of violence. In the case of Paola, there is no identifiable individual or group responsible for her plight. Rather, social, political and economic forces systematically block certain avenues that could improve her plight and facilitate an increase of preventable harms and injuries to Paola and other Colombians. Water-born diseases, death by starvation or assassination, the inability to feed oneself and family without wages or access to food, birth defects from massive consumption of pesticides and herbicides– these unintended consequences of the structural and institutional changes in Colombian political and economic relations make it possible for massive harms and injuries to fall upon large numbers of people without any immediate hope of alleviation. When the relations of power are organized to benefit a few already wealthy and healthy people at the expense of the health and needs satisfaction of large populations of people, important questions arise which I will address in the following pages: How are such circumstances morally and politically distinct from armed guerrillas and paramilitaries directly blocking access to food and farmable land with threats and direct instruments of violence? Should we restrict our understanding of violence to the immediate actions of agents or should we extend our understanding of violence to include cases where harms are routinely perpetuated by social systems and not by

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identifiable agents? If we ought to move beyond immediate activity and localized contexts, how then is violence distinct from other social undesirables like oppression, domination and exploitation?

Importance of focusing on violence *and* power: an alternative approach

I will argue that we ought to extend our understanding of violence beyond immediate activity and localized contexts and that we must develop an understanding of violence as both emerging from and affecting specific organized relations of power. In the next chapter I will focus on traditional approaches to violence, their analytic and normative orientations towards violence, as well as their theoretical ability to explain general political and economic phenomenon. Relying primarily on the work of Robert Audi, C.A.J. Coady and Hannah Arendt, I will characterize classical treatments of violence as being bound up with four basic elements: i) direct activity, ii) malicious intent, and iii) forceful action resulting in iv) harm and injury to others. While not entirely rejecting their conceptions, I will show how each is inadequate for explaining a wide range of instances of violence and too restrictive for placing complex relations of violence within organized relations of power.

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In the second chapter of this study, we will move beyond these discourses which are geared towards restricting our understanding of violence to immediate acts of identifiable subjects and localized contexts. In this chapter I will present the most influential attempt to extend and broaden our concept of violence by introducing a notion of structural violence. The work of sociologist, peace theorist, and international political mediator Johan Galtung develops a notion of violence that goes beyond direct and intentional activity and brings violence in relation with other social phenomena. Moving away from the conditions of intentionality, direct and forceful activity, and discrete causes of violence, Galtung conceives of violence in terms of avoidable needs deprivations and impediments to human freedom. Coupled with the conditions of indirectness and unintentionality, *structural* violence manifests itself as violence beyond the activity of identifiable subjects and instead stems from unequal distributions of power. Within this context of Galtung's notion of structural violence, I will analyze the role of structural violence in relation to specific distributions of power, namely domination and exploitation. Galtung argues that we cannot underestimate the importance of structural violence for sustaining groups in dominant positions of decision-making power and for those "topdogs" who exploit vast populations of "underdogs."

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For Galtung, domination and exploitation are two inseparable and central forms of power within his understanding of structural violence. I will argue that Galtung's argument provides an advance over the traditional and restrictive approaches to violence. Nonetheless, his conception presents some fundamental difficulties. I will show that he invariably goes too far in extending violence beyond perceivable harms and violations to persons and ends up casting violence as a gap between what one could have or could do and what one actually has or actually can do (i.e. potential/actual realization gap). Such a wide conception treats many phenomena as violence which are clearly not violence. Furthermore, with Galtung's ambiguous understanding of structures and his resulting notion of structural violence, we are no longer able to distinctly evaluate and judge violence as a separate phenomenon from domination, exploitation, oppression and injustice. Structural violence as "indirect and unintended impediments to human freedom," then acts as a way to categorize broad and diverse political relations under this one umbrella concept. As I will argue, structural violence for Galtung is reducible to particular unequal and unjust distributions of power in that a change to "distributions of power" results in changes to relations of violence.

In chapter three, I will argue for retaining the notion of structural

violence for political theory and will offer an alternative version of this idea

that overcomes the problems that plague Galtung's account. In order to

develop an alternative account of structural violence, I will present a

complex relational conception of structures. Relying upon the analysis of

the commodity-form and unemployment found in the early chapters of

Marx's *Capital*, I will extract the concept of structure he develops in his

analysis of political and economic relations in a capitalist mode of

production. In this discussion, we will examine the dialectical relationship

between social structures and human activity in order to arrive at a non-

mechanistic notion of structural violence. On the one hand, structures

organize subjects into patterns of activity and generate predictable

outcomes resulting from these organized relations; on the other hand,

social activity shapes and changes present and future structural

arrangements. Instead of focusing on the direct/indirect or

intended/unintended motivations for the reality of violence, we will study

the activity and choices of agents as they relate to structural forces

organizing and, in a limited sense, predetermining their activity. My

account of structural violence situates violence both subjectively and

objectively within these relations of power by focusing on the relationship

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between social structures *and* human activity. Within my alternative

notion structural violence, we see that violence is both an instrument for

social control at the hands of subjects in particular positions of power and

that it is also a force that organizes the possibilities for decisions and

choices of communities and groups, thus operating relatively autonomously

and separately from the wills of particular groups and persons in positions

of decision-making power. While certain dominant groups can coercively

and directly force compliance with certain mandates, all of these groups

are affected by the structural forces that compel or expose them and others

to choices which result in violence. Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the

role that agents play in shaping and changing these structural forces

themselves.

From this conception of structures, I will offer an alternative notion

of structural violence that retains the distinctiveness of power and

violence. Not only do relations of power organize conditions to make

violence likely or inevitable, violence is in many cases a precondition for

the exercise of power. Through an analysis of the relations of violence in

industrial factory farms in chapter three as well as an analysis and case

study of battles over water privatization in chapter four, the viability of my

alternative account of structural violence for analyzing relations of violence

beyond immediate intentional and forceful activity will be illustrated in detail.

Looking more closely at the slaughterhouse illustration, we can begin to see how my account clearly addresses the complex reality of violence within political-economic relations. Ideological distortions of political and economic relations within contemporary U.S. slaughterhouses can obscure the reality of structural violence under the guise of "industrial accidents" or "costs of manufacturing." When structural violence is depicted as an "accident," the need for the justification of such injurious activity goes undemanded and calls for systemic change goes unheeded. When such injustices as these "accidents" goes unnoticed, structural violence continues to inconspicuously affect people. Using specific cases within this industry, we will look at the "routine workplace accidents" where tens of thousands of workers die and hundreds of thousands of workers are severely injured, if not permanently disabled. From these specific cases where the corporate demands of efficiency and profitability compete with the demands of workers to keep their jobs, it is quite evident that the interests of each party precludes and blocks focusing on worker safety and care within relations of production. Given the domination and exploitation of management over workers as well as the subtle intimidating and coercive

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relations between workers themselves, individual workers face dangerous

conditions with little ability to change their own situations. Structural

forms of violence are readily evident when the forces behind productive

relations and the structural imperatives within particular institutional

positions of power are clearly spelled out. Underneath the everyday

appearance of workplace life, we find ways in which the relations between

workers and managers are organized around their own group interests, by

the presence or lack of legal constraints, and by the associated enforcement

mechanisms that either facilitate or constrain more immediate relations of

violence. These structures either prohibit or allow certain harms and

injuries to be preosent, if not inevitable. Without adequate safety measures

and protections, the threat of injury or death looms large within the

slaughterhouse experience. So to treat and call worker injuries and deaths

"accidents" within meatpacking industries elides how this and other

industries (e.g. foundries, garment factories, large-scale agricultural

production, etc.) are systematically organized to handle and expect chronic

worker injuries and deaths. We must then conclude that violence is

integral to the labor process and that such relations of power depend upon

established relations of violence. In such a situation, we must be able to

conceptualize violence in terms that account for such ideological

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distortions. Through my account of structural violence, we will be in able to analyze such distortions of relations of power in order to identify and evaluate violence at a structural level.

Once we are then clear on how my account of structural violence for itself is distinct from Galtung's, in the final chapter we will relate structural violence to our understanding of domination and exploitation. As I mentioned previously, structural violence for Galtung is nothing other than "unjust distributions of power" and "unequal exchanges of needs currencies." My conceptual analysis of these three concepts will clarify how violence is distinct but nevertheless interconnected with these power relations. While domination and violence are closely related within many cases of authority, domination is not simply violence being done by one group to another. Rather, if we understand domination to be the direct control or power that one group has over another group which serves the interests of the former group against the interests of the latter, then we understand that within particular cases harms and injuries may arise (and in many cases they do), but that this is not a necessary condition for states of domination. Structural violence is not simply domination, an "unequal access to resources" as Paul Farmer defines it nor "unequal distributions of power" as Galtung defines it. It is far from self-evident that equalizing

relations of power entails a vast reduction of systemic forms of violence overall.

Nevertheless, there are also important interconnections between structural violence and domination that I do not want to underemphasize or ignore. Using the current structural arrangement of the global marketplace – the organization and structure of international and transnational economic and political decision-making bodies (e.g. IMF/WB, WTO, EU, G8), the role of international trade agreements and trade enforcement mechanisms in shaping economic activity, and the structural imperative of privatizing public goods (i.e. out of profitability for corporations and/or nation-states, out of necessity for other resource accumulation for poorer nations) – we will map out the ways that relations of violence support and sustain the power that these small, unelected bodies have over vast groups of people. The structural forces of capitalist globalization, organized and implemented by these groups, is increasing the level of starvation, disease, and death in the world at a ever-accelerated rate. Countries adopting the neoliberal model (usually through financial coercion via IMF and WB loans) are forced to deregulate and commodify all previously public goods, to give up direct trade control over their national economies and industries in order to support an export-

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oriented production scheme, and to suppress the decision-making power of national populations. As we've seen in countries all over South America, Africa and Central Asia, "development" maintains and exacerbates violence against these populations of people. Analyzing then the structural imperatives behind the neoliberal development model and the power that these transnational bodies have over these countries and groups clarifies the distinctiveness, and yet interrelationship, between structural violence and domination. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the ways in which structural violence is perpetuated through non-coercive activities of social groups. While the domination of neoliberal institutions does reorganize activity to suit its own interests, we cannot deny nor ignore the unintended outcomes which result from the unconscious human activities of national and local economic and political decision-making bodies.

Similarly, we will analyze distinctions and interconnections between exploitation and structural violence. The notion of exploitation within a capitalist economy is typically used to identify the coercive appropriation of the products of labor from workers by capitalists. The capitalist wage labor contract is a long-standing example of exploitation in that there is an unfair and unequal exchange between capitalists and workers. While wage-laborers may be exploited in the sense of providing unpaid surplus labor

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time, harm and injury does not necessarily accompany such market exchanges. Yet, in many cases, deprivations, overwork, and job-related "stresses" are directly related to widespread harms of workers (i.e. illness and death, dissolution of intimate relationships, repression of personal freedoms, etc). Through an analysis of Marx's work on exploitation and a look at contemporary international exploitation within garment industries, I will provide further evidence to show why exploitation is not structural violence.

In the conclusion to this study, we can see that it makes sense to extend violence beyond immediate activity and localized contexts and that we can develop a rigorous notion of violence which recognizes harms and injuries done to persons that are distinctively structural. Within Galtung's approach, we find a conflation of relations of violence and relations of power. Thus we are committed under his notion of structural violence to the position that a change in "unequal distributions of power" results in a direct change in the reality of violence. On the other hand, the traditional approach ignores the ways that violence at a structural level makes possible and sustains certain forms of power over others. In my account, we will better see how particular relations of power organize conditions to make violence possible or inevitable and that violence both maintains and

alters organized power relations.

Chapter One: Narrow and Restricted Conceptions of Violence

In political theory violence is typically conceptualized as physical and/or psychological harm and injury caused by direct human action. In some cases the further condition of intentionality is added. It is generally agreed that violence is a means to other ends, that it is instrumental for gaining control, power, strength or influence. According to most theorists, violence is social in nature and not the direct result of biological drives or forces. Genetic or biological determinations of violence rarely find their way into theories of violence but root causes are sought within socially-constructed human relations.

In a recent collection of essays on institutional violence, the dominant view of violence includes three basic elements: i) violence is an act done by someone to something, ii) injury or harm is a necessary condition for some outcome or consequence of action to be recognized as violence, and iii) violence is the application of vigorous or extreme physical force.[17] While a fourth element mentioned above finds its way into some

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17 *Institutional Violence*, Value Inquiry Book Series, Vol. 88, edited by Deanne Curtin and Robert Litke, Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 1999, p. xi. These traditional accounts on violence include: Newton Garver, "What Violence Is," *The Nation*, Vol. 206, Issue 26, 24 June 1968, p. 819; Robert Audi, "On the Meaning and Justification of Violence," Ronald B. Miller, "Violence, Force, and Coercion," in

conceptions of violence – the injury and harm must be intended and/or

foreshadowed prior to action – the three basic elements are widely relied

upon within philosophical and political discourses on violence. A brief

survey of Hannah Arendt's important essay *On Violence* (which we will

discuss later in more detail) presents a wide range of views that all

conceptualize violence in ways different from her basic understanding,

including Mao, Sorel, Fanon, Carmichael, Hobbes, Jouvenel and C. Wright

Mills. Fred R. von der Mehden states that "In general, the concept of

violence includes acts such as killing, injuring, raping or forcibly stealing

from others."[18] In his study of political violence across cultures, he finds

that increasing levels of political violence result predominantly from class

antagonisms, ethnonational conflicts, and colonial/anti-colonial struggles.

In his analysis, political violence is tightly wedded to intentional human

action(s). In the most comprehensive study of nonviolent social movements

to date[19], the spectacle of violence within discussions of guerrilla warfare,

worker strikes, state sanctioned genocides or international imperialist rule

and war is conceptualized in a way that relies heavily upon all four of these

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Violence: Award Winning Essays in the Council for Philosophical Studies Competition, edited by Jerome Shaffer, New York: McKay, 1971.

18 *Comparative Political Violence*, London: Prentice Hall, 1973, p. 5.

19 *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, edited by Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall, New York: Palgrave Press, 2000.

major elements of violence. From this cursory look at these representatives from diverse theoretical orientations across the political spectrum, we find that there is *general* agreement on what constitutes violence.

Despite *general* agreement, we should not underplay the contested nature of this concept. Upon further investigation and inquiry into each of these views, the application and evaluation of violence is much more problematic and contentious, particularly when specific normative boundaries are placed upon, or loosened from, a conception of violence.[20] Instead of trying to organize all these diverse views, comments and theories of violence under one basic understanding of violence, it is important to recognize that though these three or four basic elements orient and circumscribe a vast number of debates, discussions and definitions of violence, each of these elements are understood in a variety of ways. In what follows here, we will look at two of these traditional accounts of violence by Robert Audi and C.A.J. Coady in addition to Hannah Arendt's influential treatment of violence and power. Through analysis and evaluation of these three accounts I will clarify and single out the pivotal issues surrounding debates about how violence ought to be

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20 See Robert Paul Wolff's essay "On Violence," *Journal of Philosophy* LXVI, no. 19, Oct. 2, 1969, pp. 601-616; Sidney Hook, "Legal obligation and the Duty of Fair Play," in *Civil Disobedience and Violence*, edited by Jeffery Murphy, Belmont, 1971.

understood and used within political theory.

I will first present each of these views in turn by providing their specific conception of violence, using illustrations of acts of violence to show how each understands violence in and for itself. From Audi's work, we will gain an understanding of violence situated in terms of immediate activity, extreme or excessive manner of action, and readily observable phenomenon. Next, we will look at Arendt's work that strives to distinguish violence from power, strength and force in order to clarify how violence itself is instrumental for social action (i.e. means-ends reasoning about violence). Third, I will present Coady's notion of violence, which is reliant upon all four elements of violence introduced above. His view will illuminate the restrictivist position which aims to ground our understanding of violence in intentional and direct human action. From an explanation and analysis of these three views, we will better see how the four major elements of traditional theories of violence are developed and understood.

Following the exposition of these views, I will show why they are inadequate for theoretical-political thinking about violence. I will argue that we must not restrict our understanding of violence exclusively to direct, intentional human action. There are a number of cases of violence

that I will put forward which are clearly not acceptable to Arendt, Coady, or Audi. In my estimation, these three theorists fail to appreciate the complex relations involved within instances and cases of violence and instead restrict our understanding of violence to direct human activity and interaction.

The four basic objections I will articulate in order to show why these accounts are inadequate: i) extreme or vigorous application of force is not necessary for the reality of violence, ii) violence can occur without subjects acting against others, iii) intentionality is not a necessary condition of violence, and that iv) the causal chain between violence and its effects is not always localizable. Following these objections, I will present a number of cases of violence – which would not qualify as such under these narrow and restrictivist approaches – in order to open the door to discuss why we ought to take seriously the broadened or extended approaches to violence. In agreement with Arendt's approach (though not her conclusions), we must carefully consider the relationship between violence and power. In this spirit, though, we will begin to look at instances of violence within the context of unjust relations of power (i.e. domination and exploitation) in order to show why we must broaden our approach to violence and situate it within particular contexts. Finally, we will be able to conclude from these

four objections that violence must be broadened beyond the traditional

accounts that circumscribe violence solely in terms of immediate activity

and localized contexts.

Traditional Approaches to Violence

Robert Audi refines a notion of violence that focuses on its human

character and sets aside conceptions of violence rooted in natural

occurrences (i.e. storms, earthquakes, non-human predators killing prey)

and metaphorical senses of violence (e.g. an interpretation being violence to

a text). As he characterizes his approach, "Violence in this sense is always

done, and it is always done *to* something."[21] A person can flail about her

arms violently, cursing the blustery weather, but this would not constitute

violence as such under Audi's notion. Here she is merely *acting violently*

and not doing violence *to* another. In this case, there is no object of

violence, nothing to which violence is being done. A relationship between

an acting "subject" and an "object" subjected to violence is necessary on

Audi's approach for there to be violence in a sense that is significant for

political theorists. Striving to overcome the vagueness of this pliable

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21 "On the Meaning and Justification of Violence," in *Violence: Award Winning Essays in the Council for Philosophical Studies Competition*, edited by Jerome Shaffer, New York: McKay, 1971, p. 50.

concept when applied to situations or events, Audi focuses his analysis on specific degrees and kinds of actions. Explicitly stated, Audi defines violence as:

> The physical attack upon, or the vigorous physical abuse of, or vigorous physical struggle against a person or animal; or the highly vigorous psychological abuse of, or the sharp caustic psychological attack upon, a person or animal; or the highly vigorous, or incendiary, or malicious and vigorous, destruction or damaging of property or potential property.[22]

In order for there to be a physical attack or psychological abuse, there must be a subject that attacks, abuses, or struggles against another. Also, there must be an object – something or someone specific – that the action is done to. When an assailant kills an innocent bystander in order to reach his intended target, the subject intentionally causes irreparable harm to the object of violence in a vigorous and malicious manner. In cases of suicide or intrapersonal psychic neuroses, the subject that attacks or abuses is identical with the object of violence.

Understanding violence in terms of *Subject-Action-Object relations* (SAO relations), as Audi and many other political theorists do, *prima facie* situates discussions of violence around immediate human action and localized contexts.[23] Rape, murder, bludgeoning, torturing, throwing stones through windows, trampling, punching, slapping, flogging, shooting– all

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22 Ibid., pp. 59-60.
23 This SAO relational understanding of violence, coined by Johan Galtung, will be returned to later.

these *actions done by subjects to others* are themselves acts of violence. In order to further reduce the vagueness of this concept, Audi introduces two further conditions to his conception of violence. First, he uses language that identifies the extreme degree or excessive nature of the action. A light trampling on a friend done in jest may cause harm, but it is not an act of violence. However, a malicious and vigorous trampling that severely injures one's friend is an act of violence. Second, Audi recognizes the two predominant forms that violence takes: physical and psychological. These two forms focus us on the immediacy of the action and in what dimension of the SAO relation violence is said to occur. In the case of child abuse, a physical assault and a barrage of demeaning and harmful obscenities would both be characterized as violence against a person's body or ego. In both cases, there is immediate harm done to the object of violence by an immediate and extreme action of the subject.

Making explicit these two conditions of violence – immediate action which is also carried out in an excessive or extreme manner – refines and clarifies violence for political theory and it further clarifies how violence is distinctive from other kinds of morally and politically significant kinds of action. Force, coercion, aggression, brutality, oppression – these kinds of action, though closely related to violence, are nevertheless distinct from it.

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A police officer can verbally force a driver from her car with a few kind and polite words without reaching for a nightstick or gun. A salesperson can use aggression to try to sell you a pair of shoes without resorting to abuse or attack on you and your own old pair of shoes. In both cases, the explanation of how the action was done and how it affected the object of the action would not involve appeals to violence. One might be annoyed and even feel intimidated, but one would not, according to Audi, have grounds to claim that violence was done as explained here. In contrast, most cases of brutality are violence and yet one can subtlety abuse a child, and thereby do violence to her/him, without acting in brutal manner. Oppression, a central concept within political theory, is not always explicitly felt or noticed by those who are members of an oppressed group and so may go unchallenged or unlamented. Members then of oppressed groups are not, according to Audi, objects of violence in light of their oppression. Rather, violence can be a tool directly used by those subjects who want to enforce these oppressive relations and maintain their dominance over members of these particular groups.

For Audi, then, one major distinction between oppression and violence is that violence never goes unfelt or unnoticed and it is not necessarily a violation of a moral right. We can observe wrestlers doing

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violence to one another in a collegiate wrestling tournament, but neither

are violating a moral right of the other wrestler. Similarly for Audi, we can

defend ourselves against a would-be mugger and this is "also a case of

doing violence to someone yet not a case of violating that person."[24] The

distinction then between a violation of a moral right and an act of violence

is notable when we look at specific cases of violence. As Audi illustrates:

> ...if we glimpse a man forcefully slapping a woman's face, we know he is doing
> violence to her; but since for all we know he may be arresting a fit of hysteria in the
> only way anyone knows how in her case, we do not know whether he is violating
> any of her rights...[25]

Audi's use of this case serves to illustrate the observable nature of violence

versus the unobservable nature of violating a moral right. This final

condition, that violence done to another is observable, further reflects

Audi's concept of violence as immediate human activity in localized

contexts. Using specific cases in SAO relational terms, we are able to see

who is the perpetrator of violence, to whom violence is being done, and

what exactly counts as violence. While Audi admits that there will always

be borderline cases due to the inherent vagueness of the notion of violence,

his theoretical conception of violence is paradigmatic for the political

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24 Audi, Robert. "Violence, Legal Sanctions, and Law Enforcement," in *Reason and Violence:
  Philosophical Investigations*, edited by Sherman M. Stanage, Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams
  & Co., 1974, p. 32.
25 *Reason and Violence*, p. 33.

theorists who investigate violence for itself.[26]

In her essay *On Violence*, Arendt, like Audi, argues that violence is always instrumental, it is done by someone to someone or something. Arendt clearly states that violence is not, as many think, "the most flagrant manifestation of power."[27] Arendt argues that violence "is distinguished by its instrumental character. Phenomenologically it is close to strength, since the implements of violence…are designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength…"[28] Strength for Arendt is "something in the singular, an individual entity; it is the property inherent in an object or person and belongs to its character."[29] In contrast, Hobbes claims that power is instrumental and akin to strength. As he states, "The power *of a man* (to take it universally) is his present means to obtain some future apparent good."[30] Those who have the greatest powers are those who have "strengths united" (whether they are "original", i.e. natural power[31], or

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26 Hook, Sidney. "The Ideology of Violence," in *Revolution, Reform, and Social Justice,* New York: New York University Press, 1975, and "Social Protest and Civil Obedience," *The Humanist,* Fall 1967; Rawls, John; Lyons, David. "Moral Judgment, Historical Reality, and Civil Disobedience," *Philosophy & Pubic Affairs,* Vol. 27, 1998; Rawls, John. "The Justification of Civil Disobedience" (1968), reprinted in his *Collected Papers,* Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1999, pp. 176-89; Dworkin, Ronald. *Taking Rights Seriously,* Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1978, pp. 206-22.

27 *On Violence,* p. 35.

28 *On Violence,* p. 46. Previous to this explication, Arendt distinguishes power from strength through her dispute with the misuse of power in the case of "powerful man" or "powerful personality". Here strength for her is the proper term since it refers to the property of a singular entity and not the ability to act in concert.

29 *On Violence,* p. 44.

30 *Leviathan,* Chapter X, §1.

31 *Leviathan,* Chapter X, §2.

"instrumental", i.e. acquired powers that are means which can further increase ones powers). So, for Hobbes power is akin to strength and domination, whereas for Arendt violence is akin to strength and domination. For example, imagine an individual who is able to hold up a grocery store with a gun and steal everyone's money. Hobbes would say that it was possible to rob these people at gunpoint given the natural and instrumental powers of that person (i.e. he naturally has an intimidating voice and large physique plus a gun). Arendt would say that given the right tools (the gun to do the job and the "strong personality" to force people to act) this person was strong enough to command "unquestioned obedience" through his act of violence.[32]

Furthermore, Arendt argues that violence is diametrically opposed to power. Unlike other accounts of power in which power is conceptualized as domination (e.g. "power over" for Weber or power as Hobbes conceives it[33]), Arendt conceives of power as "the potential of a *common will* formed in noncoercive communication."[34] Power is exercised by people acting together without compulsion or coercive manipulation. In no uncertain

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32 *On Violence*, p. 41.
33 In Habermas's statement of Weber's conception of "power over", Weber sees "the fundamental phenomenon of power as the probability that in a social relationship one can assert one's own will against opposition..." *Between Facts and Norms*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), p. 147. For Hobbes' conception of power as domination and dominion, see *Leviathan*, Chapter X, §2-4, 11, 19, 39.
34 *Between Facts and Norms*, p. 147.

terms, Arendt states that:

> Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in power's disappearance.[35]

Where power is lacking (i.e. where people are dispersed and not acting in concert) and obedience of one's command is desired (i.e. domination, the "command-obedience relationship"[36]), violence may emerge in political life. That is, violence may depend upon power for its activity (e.g. armies to enforce foreign policy measures, police to enforce the law) but violence alone can never sustain power. As Arendt argues, "where commands are no longer obeyed, the means of violence are of no use…everything depends on the power behind the violence."[37] Arendt circumscribes power so as to exclude the traditional command-obedience relationship understanding of power and instead casts it in terms of concerted action. Violence is simply instrumental for the regaining or destruction of power.

In this sense, violence must confront those in positions of power directly, whether it is the police beating back the growing dissident mob or the mob destroying state property in order to bring state activity to a halt. Throughout her discussion of the relationship between violence and power,

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35 *On Violence,* p. 56.
36 *On Violence,* p. 40.
37 *On Violence,* p. 49.

Arendt uses violence in such a way to signify exactly what Audi discusses (though without the explicit definition-driven approach). Helicoptered riot gas, the lone machine gunner, black riots, torture, deliberate starvation, student destruction of University property, Russian tanks killing Czechs, bomb-throwing anarchists– from the opening page, we get the sense that it is not content of the acts of violence that are misunderstood by philosophers, but rather how power and violence are equated through "careless speech."[38] Nowhere in this text, save three pages of general discussion presented above (pp. 44-46), does Arendt make explicit how certain acts are to be understood as violent, not-violent, or nonviolent. Since power and violence are opposites for Arendt – violence being instrumental and a means to ends whereas power is an end in itself[39] – we can more clearly distinguish and evaluate acts of violence from exercises of power.

To clarify the nature of violence apart from power further, one thing Arendt does argue directly about violence is that violence itself is outside the domain of political affairs as it is antithetical to political action. She states:

> The point here is that violence itself is incapable of speech, and not merely that

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38 *On Violence*, pp. 28-9, 52-3, 66-7, 76.
39 See chapter two, pp. 44-5, 52-56.

speech is helpless when confronted with violence. Because of this speechlessness political theory has little to say about the phenomenon of violence and must leave its discussion to the technicians. For political thought can only follow the articulations of the political phenomena themselves...[40]

According to Beatrice Hanssen, Arendt leaves no doubt that power and violence are opposites, "where one rules absolutely, the other is absent." As she states "For Arendt, there could be no doubt that coercion-free, deliberative speech was the organ in and through which power was actualized," whereas violence was a means to coercively silence and repress consensus.[41]

Coady, who shares Arendt's concern with careless treatments of violence, power, force and strength, argues that it is not the indifference of theorists to the distinctions between these concepts that is important but "that they [political theorists] offer explicit definitions of the term 'violence' which exhibit both the deafness to linguistic patterns and, more significantly, the blindness to political and moral realities of which she [Arendt] complained."[42] Framing his discussion in terms of ordinary discourse, Coady seeks to defend a restricted conception of violence against what he calls the *wide* and *legitimist* views of violence. According to Coady,

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40 Arendt, Hannah. *On Revolution*, London: Penguin, 1990, pp. 18-9.
41 Hanssen, Beatrice. *Critique of Violence: Between Poststructuralism and Critical Theory*. Warwick Studies in European Philosophy, London: Routledge Press, 2000, p. 163.
42 Coady, "The Idea of Violence," in *Violence and its Alternatives*, edited by Manfred B. Steger and Nancy S. Lind, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, p. 23.

wide views of violence extend the scope of the term violence to include "a

great range of social injustices and inequalities."[43] Legitimist views of

violence rely heavily on notions of illegitimate or illegal applications of

force and/or coercion (e.g. those without state power coercing citizens into

compliance with their demands through acts of violence). Both views,

Coady claims, distort our usual understanding of violence in order to

conceptualize it with practical advantages to one's own political-moral

orientation and ends. According to Coady, the wide view is typically

associated with leftist revolutionary politics, whereas the legitimist view is

typically employed by the right and the state to criticize and stop the

resistance and dissension of those who challenge the status quo through

direct action.[44] Relying primarily on the OED's definition of violence – the

exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on or damage to persons or

property – Coady argues for a restricted notion of violence which includes

psychological damage and intended harms. Broadly speaking, Coady points

out that there are rampant hazards that are avoidable and forceful

intrusions into our lives that cause considerable harm and which alter our

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43 Coady, p. 24.
44 Robert Paul Wolff is the exception here, where he defines violence as "the illegitimate or unauthorized use of force to affect decisions against the will or desire of others" (p. 606). As an anarchist who accepts neither *de jure* or *de facto* authority of the state, violence is central to the exercise of the state's authority.

patterns of relating to one another. Coady claims that these patterns would

not typically be understood as instances or acts of violence. Violence, for

Coady (and according to him, for the vast majority of competent English

speakers), is intended action by particular persons that directly causes

harm or injury, whether psychological or physical. Furthermore, there is

an excessively forceful or coercive element to the violence. As we can see,

all four traditional elements are present within Coady's conception of

violence. As Coady illustrates this point:

> ...if we take a case of slow poisoning (i.e. Slow-acting and requiring repeated dosing)
> where the destructive effects are gradual and cumulative, easily mimicking a slowly
> acting sickness, I suspect that we should not call the poisoning a violent act...by
> contrast, the use of poison gas in war, or the like swiftly acting poison, would be
> much more like dealing a blow, and fairly clearly a violent act.[45]

For Audi, Arendt, and Coady, violence is a distinctive concept within

political theory that is rooted in social action. The most important orienting

principle for Coady's and Audi's conceptions of violence and the most

salient aspect of any judgment made about violence is *how* that act is

carried out, the manner in which it is executed. An accidental blow to one's

head from another's fist – say the subject slipping and striking another's

face – would not, according to Coady and Audi, be violence. In this case the

intention for harm plus the vigorous or extreme execution of the act are

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45 Coady, p. 37.

important for judging whether the act was violent or not. In this case,

though not all cases, intentionality is an important element. As Audi

states, "But even if the vast majority of actual cases of violence, and all the

paradigm cases, are intentional [raping, beating, killing, etc.], it

nevertheless seems possible for violence to be unintentional."[46] Similar to

Coady's example, Audi discusses the difference of interpretation of a

poisoning and whether or not we ought to understand it as an act of

violence. As Audi presents this example, he states:

> If, for example, the question arises of whether a certain poisoning represents
> violence, one important consideration that would naturally occur to us is *how* it is
> carried out, especially whether it was carried out with vigorous physical abuse of
> the victim.[47]

It is readily apparent then that the action side of an immediate

relationship between two or more subjects is important to consider,

according to Coady, when judging whether or not violence occurs. It is the

nature of the action done, versus the harms and injuries which occur,

which are necessary to consider when identifying and evaluating acts of

violence. As I have illustrated and pointed out here, judging violence for a

number of traditional theorists of violence is intimately tied up with

immediate human actions done by subjects to others (i.e. to objects of

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46 Audi, p. 58. Brackets refer to Audi's previous examples of paradigm cases.
47 Ibid.

violence).

Broadening our understanding of violence within political theory

If we restrict our understanding of violence to the above approaches, then there are four limitations and problems we must confront in terms of the four major elements within traditional conceptions of violence.

First, in cases where individual subjects do not cause harms or injuries, systemic injuries and harms go untheorized as violence. The campaign of genocide in Rwanda is a clear case of mass direct violence. When machetes, guns, ropes and locally-made explosives were used to strangle, chop, mangle, maim and eliminate 800,000 people in 100 days of continuous slaughter, it was clear that we had an organized campaign of mass violence. Even though the rhetoric of the U.S. administration was to deliberately call these killings only "acts of genocide," it was clear that this rhetorical move was made not to deny the reality of violence, but to evade international mandates that force the U.S. to intervene when genocide occurs. Yet, when the international scholar and activist Vandana Shiva claims that it is genocidal to deny medicine to those who need it, in the name of making profits, the organized campaign of mass violence is less

salient and less convincing. In the latter case, according to the narrow

approach, there are a number of features missing, one being that the injury

or harm is not done by one to another. In her defense, we have a case of

avoidable deaths for thousands, if not millions, of people.

> Under the Trade Related Intellectual Property agreement of the World Trade
> Organization, countries have to implement patent laws granting exclusive,
> monopolistic rights to the pharmaceutical and biotech industry. This prevents
> countries from producing low cost generic drugs. Patented HIV/AIDS medicine costs
> $15,000, while generic drugs made by India and Brazil cost $250-300 for one year's
> treatment. Patents are, therefore, literally robbing AIDS victims of their lives.[48]

Given the coercive economic system of the WTO, countries are unable to

produce and distribute such necessary goods to their populations that may

inhibit or violate trade agreements, despite human needs and regardless of

the cost to human lives and suffering. When the suffering is socially

caused, and it is avoidable, Shiva claims that we have a situation of

violence.[49] This system kills people just as Hutu militias killed Tutsi's and

Hutu moderates. To call one "violence" and the other "public policy" simply

because one involves subjects doing something to another wrongly evades

the way that systems can be a part of an influence relation.

We've already seen the approach to violence in terms of SAO

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48 "Violence of Globalization," *The Hindu*, New Delhi, India, March 25, 2001.
49 Shiva provides a host of examples that illustrate her philosophy of systemic violence. She claims that there are a host of cases which illustrate the fact that avoidable and massive human suffering are perpetuated without specific acts being done to other people by particular subjects: the increased usage of Roundup within large-scale farming, the proliferation of BSE, so-called Mad Cow Disease, the denial of access to necessary medical supplies for persons with AIDS, the patenting of foods and the piracy of indigenous knowledge of land and agriculture, and the sterilization of seeds.

relations. Here we have an influencer (S), an influencee (O), and a mode of influence (A). I suspect though that the genocide Shiva talks about is unconvincing to those holding the narrow approach for two reasons. First, there is no mode of influence, there is no direct action being done by one person to another. While there is "agricultural piracy" through patents of particular types of grains, we have no direct action to point to and say *that* is violence. Second, since violence is socially caused (i.e. it is not a natural phenomenon nor is it biologically or genetically determined) and there is no agent causing violence through direct activity, violence cannot be said to be present according to the traditional approach.

In Shiva's account of genocide, we can make a plausible case for understanding violence within this notion of an influence relation (though Shiva would not restrict our understanding of violence to such an understanding). That is, coercive social arrangements are a mode of influence. They forcefully influence actors and/or groups to do certain things and not do other things by virtue of the threat of sanctions or other negative reinforcements. Countries can be barred from the WTO, can be fined, and contracts with companies from WTO member countries can be nullified. "Representatives" of poorer persons with AIDS in India and

Brazil are then influenced by such policies and, for all intents and purposes, block these persons from accessing medicine that could save their lives. Simply because there is no *direct* influencer, no recognizable subject doing something, does not then disqualify such avoidable socially caused human harm and/or injury from being violence.

Second, Audi and Coady demand a condition that is not necessary for the recognition of violence, namely, that violent activity be done in a vigorous, excessive, and/or malicious manner. There are two objections I have to this. First, there are many counterexamples that illustrate what we would describe as violence where actions are slow and methodical. Execution by arms or swords may be a brutal and grotesque form of violence, but the intentional poisoning of a foe is also violence, especially in terms of direct SAO relations. There is an intention and act of harm done by one to another. While the fourth element of excessive force is absent, this case still illustrates clear intent, direct action and the condition of harm required by most traditional approaches. The consideration that is more important for my purposes is that this condition points to something underlying traditional philosophical thinking on violence. The kinds of conditions these theorists place on violence attests to the fact that when we judge something to be violence, the subject, the one causing violence, is of

primary importance, and object, the one who violence is done to, is of secondary concern. The object is inert, passive, and something (not someone) that is *done to.*

Our usual thinking about violence is much more intersubjective than Coady's and Audi's theories allow. We must identify and evaluate violence more intersubjectively, not only in terms of the way in which a subject's actions are done. The way that the object side of violence is affected is important in our judgment and recognition of violence. How do we judge what is and is not violence within the remains of a burned down village community or a bombed city? Must we know why these bombs were dropped and the manner in which the village was burned down in order to claim that violence was done? In the former case, no. In the latter case, it is an important feature in that there are social causes to burnt down structures and there are non-social causes. In many cases, though obviously not all, the effects of avoidable socially-caused human injury are enough to attest to the reality and presence of violence. In a complex account of violence, we must not privilege the way that violence is done to another, but we must also focus on the way that avoidable, socially caused injury and harm manifests itself, qualitatively and quantitatively, within the lives of those who are affected by violence. In chapter three, I will

further challenge this limitation illustrated by these first two points here and give further evidence why it is vital to include the subjective aspect to the object side of violence when analyzing and evaluating violence.

Third, violence manifests itself within routine unintended relations between subjects, as they are situated within specific institutional and group contexts. To cast violence as anti-political, as outside the purview of political relations and in the realm of anti-speech as Arendt does, shows a marked exclusion of the ways that structures and routine practices organize actors to "act in concert," towards violent ends, thereby perpetuating violence against themselves and others. Violence is not a phenomenon outside the domain of political affairs, be they affairs seeking to end crime, poverty or state repression or even affairs to intervene on the behalf of a politically vulnerable Other with threats of violence. In fact, violence is integral to political decision-making processes under the dominant influence of centralized institutional authorities seeking their own preservation, control, and influence over international political and economic structures. As we will see in chapter four, violence is both an outcome and a function of specific relations of power within political affairs.

Fourth, not only are subjects of violence unnecessary for violence to

be present within routine relations, but intentionality is also a condition

which must be loosened from a philosophy of violence. Coady summarizes

quite well this position on intentionality being central to conceptualizing

violence:

> Life is hazardous in many different ways and we may be harmed by natural
> disasters and accidents or by disease or the indifference and lack of consideration of
> our fellows or by social arrangements which are to our disadvantage. We can
> sometimes take steps to guard against all of these – we can avoid certain areas,
> move from certain communities, cultivate friends and so on. But in addition to all
> the hazards mentioned there is another which many people fear very greatly,
> namely, the forceful intrusion into their lives of those who are intent upon inflicting
> harm and injury upon their person. It is not surprising that this should be so and
> that a distinctive way of speaking should arise to mark the reality to which we react
> in this way.[50]

Illustrated here are two distinct cases. In the first case, we have *structural*

violence according to Galtung, which we will see in detail within the next

chapter.[51] According to Coady though, this first case is summed up in one

word: life. It is in our interest to avoid those hazards that we can and deal

with those hazards that we cannot avoid in ways that are available to us.

In the second case presented above, we clearly have Coady's notion of

violence – the forceful intrusion plus intent to inflict harm by one to

another. But the justification for the first case being "life" and the second

case being "violence" is that we react to the forceful intrusion as violence

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50 Coady, p. 37.

51 Natural disasters which occur without socially mediated activity would be an exception within
Coady's conceptualization of the wide approach to violence and would not be included within
Galtung's notion of structural violence.

and see the accident or disease as a part of the order of things. However,

certain social rules or legal norms may not be written in such a way that

massive social harms and injuries are perpetuated against underprivileged

people, but these rules or norms organize relations between subjects in

such a way that these "accidents" or "diseases" are likely to happen to these

marginalized groups. Just because we don't see them doesn't make them

any less of a forceful intrusion into our lives. Revisiting the case of denying

medicine to poorer persons with HIV or AIDS in so-called "underdeveloped"

nations, it is clearly not the intent of WTO policies to kill off those groups

of people. Rather, the intent is for pharmaceutical companies to be able to

make a "healthy profit" and to ensure that international trade remains

"fair" (i.e. it would be unfair to expect companies to "give away" their

products, according to one WTO representative).

In conjunction with the above illustration, a final limitation upon the

narrow approach is that it is necessary to recognize the cause of violence in

order to specify what exactly is violence. But, as we are able to see in a

plethora of cases, finding the cause of violence is not necessary for the

recognition of violence. Emphasizing again the objective aspects of the

reality of violence, massive and avoidable injuries can occur within routine

social relations where there is no specific, localizable cause. To locate the

cause of the wide variance of death rates of those with AIDS or malaria in the U.S. and those with AIDS or malaria in sub-Saharan Africa would be to look for a complex set of preconditions and causes that mediate between these epidemics and the social, political and environmental conditions that structures each of these geographical areas. As treatment costs around $500-$1,000 per year for the average sub-Saharan African infected with HIV (approximately equal to a year's wages), many of those persons do not get the treatment whereas those in the U.S. infected with HIV have a much greater chance of receiving publicly funded treatment, or can themselves afford to pay for expensive treatment programs. As Kevin Watkins illustrates, "In the low-income countries of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia public spending on health amounts to less than $10 per capita...Governments in high-income countries spend in excess of $2,000 per person...[and yet] Developing countries account for over 80 percent of the global burden of disease, but less than 20 percent of global health spending."[52] Given restricted public funding and the availability of consumer choices, well over one-third of developing countries lack adequate access to life-saving medicine. As the causes of these particular cases could be further drawn out, it becomes clear that a great deal of the violence

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52 "Pharmaceutical Patents," in *Anti-Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement*, London: Bookmarks Publications, 2001, p. 99.

heaped upon poorer peoples with illnesses and diseases lacks any clear,

localizable cause that individuals can observe and work towards changing.

A reliance on an understanding of structures would in fact aid us in

analyzing violence beyond direct activity. Given the complexity of such

violence at a structural level, effects of violence are manifest without

perceivable causes at the level of immediate activity or relations between

particular individuals.

Conclusion

We can now conclude a number of things from the analysis and

criticisms of traditional approaches to violence. First, the recognition of

acts of violence is not dependent upon the manner in which an action is

done to another. Coupled with this objection is the second point that the

recognition of the presence of violence is not dependent upon the actions of

subjects against objects. Moderate processes of disproportionate acquisition

of necessary social goods (not violence itself) can produce outcomes of

violence that are no less real and consequential than an armed and

murderous thief. Third, violence can be maintained and is perpetuated

within political affairs without intentional activity. Fourth, violence is not

bound by an immediate and identifiable temporal causal chain. While the effects of violence are readily apparent, the origins or causes may be unlocalizable or even untraceable and are in many cases the unintended outcomes of routinized practices.

Given these four objections against i) Audi's approach of qualifying acts of violence by their vigor, maliciousness or excessiveness, ii) Arendt's means-ends reasoning about violence, and iii) Coady's restrictive notion of violence in terms of intentionality, we are now able to see that the traditional, direct action approach excludes cases that plausibly can be described as violence. Without the impetus of a particular subject, an unintended outcome of industrial relations of production is the *process* of workers being slowly killed by inhumane labor conditions, exploitative contract regulations, eroded on-the-job health and medical provisions, and neglected safety parameters. Without such organized industrial activity, we would not have these kinds of murders happening. Audi and Coady unconvincingly reject such language of slow killing and unintended murder. In the following chapters I will present the most influential conception of extended violence (i.e. structural violence) that makes sense of such language. Furthermore, this account shows that a broad approach to violence doesn't simply reduce violence to "socially disapproved

outcomes" or "one-problem/one-solution" characterizations of the wide

approach. Before the presentation of my argument, we will look at how

philosophers thus far have attempted to extend our understanding of

violence beyond these narrow and restrictivist approaches.

Chapter Two: A Critique of Galtung's Notion of Structural Violence

In this chapter, we will look at the influential account of "extended violence" put forth by the peace theorist and sociologist Johan Galtung. Working from his pivotal 1969 essay "Violence, Peace and Peace Research" to his recent book *Searching for Peace*, I will present his understanding of direct and structural violence and show how he extends our understanding of violence in order to explain the pervasive and ubiquitous reality of violence beyond direct intentional activity. As we will see, Galtung seeks to avoid atomizing accounts that restrict violence and violent activity to forceful, intentional harms and injuries caused by identifiable subjects. Instead, Galtung maps out a broad understanding of violence that includes impediments and obstacles to human freedom that result in suffering, misery and death.

Introducing this approach, I will present his notion of structural violence, showing how it differs from restrictive approaches to violence and show how he includes a wide range of phenomena under this umbrella concept. Once I present the distinctive features of Galtung's account, we

will look at how this account has been endorsed and used by philosophers, sociologists, peace researchers and historians. From the analysis of economic sanctions and world health issues (i.e. AIDS, dysentery, cholera) to criticisms of militarism, racism, sexism and economic inequality, the recognition and discussion of structural violence has increased considerably since Galtung introduced his broadened approach to violence.

Nevertheless, Galtung's extended account of violence has been criticized by some theorists of violence, including Coady and Audi. Audi argues that we must not extend violence to express moral outrage about a wide range of phenomena – which Galtung is accused of doing – since this simply confuses violence with other "socially undesirable phenomenon." Coady claims that a widened conception of violence may have undesirable practical consequences. He argues that it wrongly explains personal violence in terms of social arrangements and it mistakenly characterizes forms of inaction as instances of personal violence. Along with these considerations, I will present two critical objections to show why Galtung's notion of structural violence has been rejected by many theorists of violence. As one who sees merit in Galtung's approach, I will briefly respond to and comment on these objections before presenting my own assessment of Galtung's account.

I will argue in the final sections of this chapter that Galtung's account is flawed for three substantial reasons: i) the vagueness of his concept of violence itself, ii) his failure to provide critical attention to how structures perpetuate and maintain violence, and iii) his conflation of relations of power and violence when articulating a conception of structural violence. First, Galtung's definition of violence fails to adequately specify the relation between his concept of violence and other concepts within political theory, such as oppression, and he overextends his concept of violence to include many cases which are clearly not violence. Second, and most importantly, the mechanistic relationship Galtung constructs between social structures and human activity must be challenged. As I will argue, he ignores and obfuscates the role of agents in confronting and changing structural arrangements as well as seeing structures operating independent of the intentions and choices of social agents. Third, Galtung's conceptualizes structural violence as indistinguishable from domination and exploitation. As I will show, even if domination usually in fact involves and relies upon violence for its continuation and perpetuation, it does not follow that domination indistinguishable from violence. Similarly, Galtung treats exploitation as nothing more than a form of structural violence. For him, an unequal distribution of power (i.e. domination) and an unequal

exchange and satisfaction of needs (i.e. exploitation) are both different forms of structural violence. This reduction of power relations to violence not only shows a misunderstanding of domination and exploitation themselves, but also oversimplifies the reality and function of violence within these relations of power.

From this critique of Galtung, we will be in a position to evaluate both sides of the contentious debate between restrictive and extended approaches to violence. Through a detailed exposition and analysis of Galtung's notion of structural violence we will be able to see what this extended notion of violence is, why some philosophers have relied upon it for understanding systemic social harms and injuries, and where the problems are with Galtung's conception of structural violence. In the final two chapters I will then propose my alternative conception of structural violence and show why structural violence is of central importance to contemporary political theory, especially in the context of discussions over capitalist globalization and social justice, and how these enduring relations of violence are interwoven with, and yet independent from, particular organized relations of power.

Beyond subject-action-object relations

Given Audi's and Arendt's approach to violence, the nature of what is *done to* another, and how that action is carried out, is of central importance to an understanding of violence. But, according to Galtung's work on violence, we need to focus on the nature of harms – how persons are affected and how to eliminate that which makes those harms possible – instead of merely focusing on what is done to another and how that action is carried out. For Galtung, it matters little whether violence is done slowly or vigorously, or whether there was an actor *doing* something to spread harm. It is not how an action is done (or not done), nor whether the harms were intended by particular subjects, but rather the fact that avoidable suffering occurs in social life.

Galtung argues that we must include *indirect* harms, such as people dying from lack of access to proper medical care or from the application and enforcement of economic sanctions, when locating and naming violence. While immediate human activity and extreme or excessive degrees of harms or injuries are *elements* of many politically and morally significant conceptions of violence (i.e. direct, personal violence for Galtung), these elements are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for a complex understanding of violence. To begin to understand how Galtung

conceptualizes violence more broadly in terms of indirect harms, consider

Galtung's explicit definition of violence:

> Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual
> somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations.[53]

Here we find talk neither of immediate relations between agents nor of the

nature of the action involved that causes violence. Violence is that which

causes a gap between the potential and actual, "what could have been and

what is." If an outcome to a particular event could not have been otherwise

and that outcome was unavoidable, then in no case would there be a

potential/actual gap and in no case would we say that violence occurred.

To illustrate, I am not trained in the operation of industrial cranes.

The act of picking up a load of steel beams with a crane is currently not a

part of my potential possibilities. It is logically possible (I could plausibly

learn to operate a crane), but at this time, I am unable to operate cranes

given a lack of experience and exposure to crane operation. In this sense,

crane operating is not a part of my possibilities. If, in the future, I became

quite adept at operating cranes and grew to love this task, then it would be

part of my actual realization to operate cranes. If someone keeps me from

operating a crane, "influences me" or "impedes me," and it was avoidable

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53 Galtung, Johan. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," in *Journal for Peace Research*, Vol. 6, 1969,
    p. 168.

for her/him to do so and at that time I wanted to operate a crane, it separates my potential realization from my actual realization. Hence, according to Galtung, s/he has done violence to me since s/he has separated my potential from my actual realizations, assuming that at that time I desired and was able to operate the crane, and that s/he could have avoided her/his actions. Before I was adept at operating cranes, anyone keeping me from operating one would not be causing violence to me since there was no actual realization of crane operation for me. Without the potential for realization, someone keeping me, or "influencing" me, to use Galtung's term, from a particular action is not causing violence to me. As Galtung puts it,

> When the actual is unavoidable, then violence is not present even if the actual is at a very low level. A life expectancy of thirty years only, during the Neolithic period, was not an expression of violence, but the same life expectancy today (whether due to wars, or social injustice, or both) would be seen as violence according to our definition.[54]

Violence, for Galtung, is inherently social. The same set of conditions for a group of people can be not-violence at one time and violence at another, depending upon the preventability and the actual potentiality for realizing a desired state of affairs. To bring into greater relief his social emphasis in connection with this potential/actual realization gap, Galtung

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54 Galtung, ibid., p. 169.

has more recently articulated violence in terms of needs deprivation, which

I take to be another form of an impediment to one's freedom, an

unactualized potential realization. When a person is deprived of her/his

needs, regardless of how that person defines need, and it was potentially

and actually possible to avoid this deprivation, then, according to Galtung,

violence has occurred. He classifies needs into four basic categories:

survival needs, well-being needs, identity needs and freedom needs. These

four classes of basic needs help fit kinds of potential/actual realization gaps

neatly into a typology of violence.[55] For example, killing deprives persons

of their need to survive; sieges, misery and sanctions frustrate well-being

needs; desocialization and secondary-citizen status (e.g. immigrants,

felons) deny identity needs; and repression and expulsion strips people of

their need for freedom. Corresponding to these four classes of basic needs

are insults related to structural violence (i.e. exploitation): penetration,

segmentation, marginalization, and fragmentation.[56] According to Galtung,

any "insult to human needs" is categorizable and recognizable as an

instance of violence.

> Violence, then is anything avoidable that impedes personal growth... A deprivation
> of goods... "deprival of goods" may mean avoidable denial of what is needed to

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55 See his essay "Cultural Violence" in *Violence and its Alternatives* for a full treatment of this typology
of violence.

56 These insults to needs will be returned to later in the context of analyzing Galtung's relationship
between structural violence and exploitation.

satisfy the fundamental needs...To deprive people of cultural stimuli or to create societies, however rich, with a division of labor that forces people to stay in the same profession for life are forms of violence.[57]

Now we can see that Galtung's conception of violence, unlike Audi's and Arendt's, is not restricted to the SAO relation.[58] Galtung is not primarily interested in seeking *the* causes of violence (i.e. a neuro-chemical catalyst for violent behavior, an instinctual response to particular conditions, etc.), but rather the sources and "effects of types of violence."[59] A particular subject, acting in a particular way against another person (who in this case would be treated instrumentally according to Galtung and be considered an object), is not a necessary condition for some outcome to be considered violence. To limit our analysis and understanding of violence to these direct forms of action ignores and masks the widespread and massive kinds of harms happening to large populations of people. A whole community can starve to death, yet this can be the result of state imposed sanctions on their region and not some specific person(s) holding back a specific set of goods from that community – for example, the hundreds of thousands of children who died in Iraq mainly as a result of U.S. led UN sanctions. That is, these children may not have been directly targeted and

57 Galtung, Johan. *The True Worlds: A Transnational Perspective*, New York: Free Press, 1980, p. 67.
58 Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research," p. 171.
59 Galtung, "On Violence in General and Terrorism in Particular," New Zealand Law Association, 1978, in *Transarmament and the Cold War*, p. 281.

intentionally starved to death by the UN sanctions, but rather these deaths

by starvation are "byproducts" or "costs" (at least according to Madeline

Albright) of this political tactic of withholding social goods to enforce

compliance and conformity of the Iraqi regime. "The important point here

is that if people are starving when this is objectively avoidable, then

violence is committed, regardless of whether there is clear subject-action-

object relations..."[60] Consequently, the potential can be separated from the

actual by forces outside the activity and intentions of particular agents.

　　This example also illustrates that neither malicious intent nor

forceful action that cause harms and injuries are not necessary for

something to be violence. No specific person(s) are vigorously or

maliciously blocking people from getting access to food or medical care.

This may happen in certain cases, but this is not what we mean by

sanctions. Rather, it is a network of forces that organize the economic and

social activity between two or more nations where one or more nations are

trying to coerce other nation(s) into compliance with their desires. At the

level of SAO relations, sanctions may take any number of forms and the

actions carrying out sanctions can be brutal or gentle, vigorous or slow.

Nevertheless, even organizing relations in this way is, according to

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60 Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research," p. 171.

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Galtung, violence. When there is no such clear actor involved and violence does occur, Galtung calls these kinds of violence *structural* or *indirect*.

Features of Galtung's account of structural violence

As Galtung states, "When one husband beats his wife there is a clear case of personal [direct] violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence."[61] In the former case we can readily attribute responsibility to the actions of particular agents whereas in the latter case it is men as a class, and not as discrete individuals, who are responsible for the perpetuation of ignorance. As a result, it wouldn't make sense, in the latter case, to search for those individuals responsible in the same way as one would in the former case. The social groups of *women* and *men* are involved in different ways, the latter being the perpetrator of violence and the former being recipient of violence. On the individual-action level of analysis, the nature of responsibility and complicity changes for either case. While in both cases men are the perpetrators of violence, in the individuated cases specific men are responsible whereas in the structural cases men are those within the dominant-gendered position of power and with that dominance keep

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61 Ibid.

women in ignorance and thus separate women, as a group, from their collective and individual potential realization. Here we then have a clear duality and a sharp distinction between forms of violence that are caused by agents (or easily attributable to the activity of agents) and those in which it is not meaningful to search for particular agents as the source of the violence. Here we can understand that for Galtung it would not make sense to search for an agent responsible for structural violence nor would it make sense to deny particular responsibility to particular agent(s) when personal violence occurs. "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*."[62]

In addition to an understanding of structural violence as indirect harms, structural violence is inequality, "above all in the distribution of power."[63] Two aspects to this second feature are important to note. First, structural violence is usually understood as "inequality which leads to death." In such cases, evidence will show that members of group A are dying at a faster rate than members of group B and that these structurally caused deaths are avoidable.[64] As Galtung states:

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62 Ibid., p. 170.
63 Ibid., p. 175. See also Galtung's *Peace and World Structure*- "IV.13. A Structural Theory of Imperialism" from *Journal for Peace Research,* Vol. 8, no. 2, 1971.
64 For a treatment of this point based on Galtung's work, see Tord Hoivik's "The Demography of

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> Thus the pattern is set for an aggravation of inequality, in some structures so much so that the lowest-ranking actors are deprived not only relative to the potential, but indeed below subsistence minimum. Inequality then shows up in differential morbidity and mortality rates, between individuals in a district, between districts in a nation, and between nations in the international system – in a chain of interlocking feudal relationships. They are deprived because the structure deprives them of chances to organize and bring their power to bear against the topdogs, as voting power, bargaining power, striking power, violent power – partly because they are atomized and disintegrated, partly because they are overawed by all the authority the topdogs present.[65]

Not only then is structural violence inequality which "leads to death" (those being the clearest, most uncontroversial cases), but it is also understood as an "unequal distribution of power" between different groups. This second aspect, that the victims, agents, and supporters of structural violence are groups, not discrete and quantifiable individuals, makes evident that violence at a structural level does not simply fall under the SAO relational approach. If group A has greater power than B and are able to alter and change social conditions which negatively affect the lives of members of group B (while group B has no such power), then violence is done to the latter group, even if the conditions are unintentionally maintained by group A. Structural violence in this sense does not rely upon the intentional or coordinated actions of the dominant group but it is a result of unequal access to the resource of decision-making power.

Structural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 14, No. 1., 1977, pp. 59-73; Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen, "Peace: The Goal and the Way," in *Searching for Peace: The Road to Transcend*, Johan Galtung, Carl G. Jackobsen and Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen, London: Pluto Press, 2000, Ch. I.2.

65 Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," p. 177.

Members of group A intentionally acting in an extreme manner in order to harm members of group B would be a form of violence, but given the directness and explicitly motivated actions, it is direct violence per se. Violence at a structural level within Galtung's account is identified by the nature of the relations between different groups and not simply by the discrete acts done by one group to another.

> ...victims of structural violence are social groups rather than individual persons. At the level of events there is no identifiable set of structurally violent deaths that can be contrasted with non-violent ones. We can recognize structural violence only at the *collective* level, when we observe survival rates that are too low, relative to the resources available.[66]

Given this reality of violence operating independent of the wills of agents and establishing patterns of inequality and death, the violence which is intertwined with and resulting from the organization of social relations goes unnoticed. This is the predominant reason, according to Galtung, why structural violence is not recognized as such and is instead seen as natural or necessary to a particular social order. Over time, personal violence may ebb and flow much more rapidly, occurring and recurring much more sporadically, but structural violence changes and evolves more steadily and gradually. Since it is rare to have structural changes over night (though in some cases it may occur, e.g. revolutionary situations), changes of

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66 Galtung, *Peace and World Structure*, p. 60.

structural violence within society occur more slowly and often go

undetected.

> Structural violence was then seen as unintended harm done to human beings
> (Galtung 1969; Galtung 1980, ch. 2), as a process, working slowly as the way misery
> in general, and hunger in particular, erode and finally kill human beings. If it
> works quickly it is more likely to be noticed and strong positions for and against will
> build up so that moral stands emerge.[67]

Conditions may improve or degrade for communities of people but these

people may be unaware of these shifts effecting the level of harm done to

them. It may seem that violence is natural, unavoidable, a "part of life."

Furthermore, with the lack of an identifiable subject-action-object relation,

it may seem that violence is not present at all. Personal violence is violence

that is the *direct* result of actions of others whereas structural violence is

the indirect result of structures "upheld by the summated and concerted

action of human beings."[68] As Galtung argues, "The question [of whether

there is really a distinction between these two forms of violence] is rather

whether violence is structured in such a way that it constitutes a direct,

personal link between a subject and an object, or an indirect structural

one..."[69]

Finally, violence is not directly linked to particular individuals or

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67 Galtung, Johan, "Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some Responses,"
   Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 22, no.2, 1985, p. 145-6.
68 "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," p. 178.
69 Ibid.

groups, but rather is manifested in social life in spite of agent-transference (i.e. structures perpetuate violence above and beyond any individual agent (s)). For example, the life expectancy for poorer persons of color in the U.S. has not dramatically shifted under different governmental administrations over the last 40 years. This injustice is not primarily dependent upon isolated individuals in positions of decision-making power (though of course they are affected by them). Regardless of changes in political leadership, newly formed social institutions, and greater numbers of legal concessions, persons of color in the U.S. still make up the vast majority of the percentage of those who live below the poverty line, still die at a faster rate, and are still a greater percentage of those who die violent deaths (i.e. personal or state-sanctioned murders, "crimes of passion," etc.). As a result, the reality of structural violence is not determined solely by individuals in positions of power, authority or domination. It is "invariant of actor substitution; like a body, it persists even when all persons (atoms) have been exchanged for new ones."[70]

Galtung's understanding of the relationship between power and violence

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70 *The True Worlds*, pp. 68.

Since Galtung focuses on groups as the objects of violence, and argues that inequality of power distribution bears directly on structural violence, his notion of structural violence captures a close relationship between power and violence. As he unambiguously states,

> ...violence both in its direct and structural forms is an exercise of power; peace is the reduction of violence and consequently has to do with the regulation of power.[71]

Power is central to the presence of indirect harms and unintended but avoidable misery, hunger, suffering and death. Let us turn briefly then to look at how Galtung treats power in relation to structural violence by analyzing one of the central cases of structural violence: exploitation. Galtung's basic conception of violence as "needs deprivation" and his depiction of four insults to human needs as structural violence commit him to treating exploitation as indistinguishable from structural violence. Exploitation, for Galtung, simply means that "the topdogs get much more (here measured in needs currency) out of the interaction in the structure than the underdogs."[72] In the "developed world," water flows freely from the tap, whether it comes through wells, springs, or from municipal water sources. The negligible costs for those communities to access clean water doesn't compare to the enormous costs for those in the "developing world,"

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71 Galtung, "Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research," in *Transarmament and the Cold War*, p. 227.
72 Galtung, "Cultural Violence," p. 42.

whether we are speaking solely in terms of cost per units and the necessary

infrastructure for water distribution, or we include the costs to human

labor in terms of accessing sanitary water sources and viable separate

sewage systems (not to mention the costs to human health in terms of the

percentage of water-born diseases and deaths within these differing

populations). According to Galtung's approach, if we look at the way people

die and how water-born disease deaths are distributed, we will be able to

see how structures certain populations in beneficial or harmful ways. The

following four terms, which are "parts of exploitation," clarify important

differences that topdogs and underdogs have in interactions in the

structures:

> *Penetration*, implanting the topdog inside the underdog so to speak, combined with *segmentation*, giving the underdog only a very partial view of what goes on, will do the first job [promote 'unequal exchange']. And *marginalization*, keeping the underdogs on the outside, combined with *fragmentation*, keeping the underdogs away from each other, will do the second job [promote 'permanent, unwanted misery'].[73]

When educational, religious and political discourses continually

reinstantiate heterosexist language that unintentionally (or in many

instances intentionally) undermines the ability for same-sex partners to be

treated the same as heterosexual couples under the law, these public

discourses penetrate-segment the consciousness formation of all persons

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73 Ibid., brackets mine.

and blocks the possibility of forming non-heterosexist understandings of relationships within our collective institutions and practices. Add to this the ability of dominant heterosexist groups to marginalize and fragment members of these groups through covert or overt threats, intimidations, harassments, jokes, disapproving glances and so on. According to Galtung, all these practices organize relations in such a way that some are topdogs, others are underdogs, and the resulting differences between these groups can be seen through the widening potential/actual gap of the latter groups and the actualization of potentials for the former groups. In this case, same-sex partners (i.e. underdogs) get much less, or nothing at all, in terms of legal recognition and legal needs satisfaction than do heterosexual couples when interacting with legal structures (i.e. police rules and regulations for handling domestic violence cases, child custody battles, hospital privileges, etc.). From such cases Galtung concludes that when power is unequally distributed and underdogs are fragmented – when they cannot organize together to change their underdog status or when they are marginalized from the processes or opportunities that topdogs easily access – violence occurs. Galtung goes on to say that "...these four [penetration, marginalization, fragmentation, segmentation] should also be seen as structural violence in their own right, and more particularly as variation

on the general theme of structurally built-in repression." For Galtung, exploitation is about the "unequal exchange of needs currency." If individuals have less in terms of needs currency and are unable to actualize their own potentials, then we have a case of structural violence.

Another key concept used by Galtung to argue for structural violence in relation to power distributions is domination. As we've already seen, dominant groups can rely upon the reality of violence in order to maintain a position of power over other groups (i.e. penetration-segmentation, marginalization-fragmentation). Though the domination of underdogs is in many cases indirect and unintended, members of dominant groups still benefit from the structural ways that their lives are made immeasurably easier when navigating simple processes within structures. When speaking of a commodity like power as Galtung does, topdogs are able to use their great power to satisfy their needs in a wide variety of contexts. Throughout the world particular groups are able to work, recreate, and travel in places where others are typically excluded (e.g. whites vs. non-whites in the U.S., Caribbean, and South Africa). However, in such contexts, those non-whites with great financial means can in many cases use their monetary resource power to gain similar, though maybe not equal, access to work, recreation and travel. Indeed, those with social or cultural capital (i.e. educated

status, elite consumer identity, etc.) are able to actualize more of their desires simply by the fact that the structure is set up to privilege such capital. As Galtung states,

> Because the exercise of violence and the exercise of power are strongly related, direct violence is based on the use of resource power, structural violence on the use of structural power. Structural violence "just happens" without any specific actor behind it.[74]

This "happening," the fact that some groups benefit enormously while others continuously suffer without the intention to cause suffering or unfavorable conditions, results from the differing location of these groups within the social structures. When a culture prizes certain kinds of skills, and these skills sets are rewarded with higher grades, better college opportunities, well-paying jobs, public recognition and the like, some people benefit in unforeseen and unintended ways as a result of their place within such structural arrangements. Those who lack such skills sets are marginalized, undervalued and become invisible members of that culture. Those "unqualified" people may provide necessary kinds of labor for that society, but these jobs carry with them little value in terms of the structural forces that bring to bear on that culture's centers of power and influence.

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74 *The True Worlds*, pp. 67-8.

Domination, and dominance,[75] then, for Galtung is the "unequal distribution of power." Closely related to his notion of exploitation, domination involves the topdogs getting more (in terms of needs satisfaction and autonomy) than the underdogs.

> The underdog is the object of somebody else's power; the point of gravity for decisions affecting himself [sic] is somewhere outside himself...As to the topdog: much of his [sic] energy goes into the manipulation of others, by various means, using the power sources at his command...[76]

Within the context of military domination over a particular territory, invaded communities are subject to the plans and movement of the occupying forces. Not only are overt forms of violence denying or repressing basic freedoms (i.e. either through killings, leaflet warnings, and other propaganda intimidations), but basic travel for shopping and work is reorganized, access to necessary goods is reorganized, in some cases redistributed according to the whims of the invaders, and social interactions change even between citizens of the invaded country. As Galtung states, the "point of gravity" for typical decision-making processes shifts and the "balance of power" is grossly overweighted in favor of the occupying forces. In the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza

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75 While there is a differing degree of motivation behind the actions of the topdogs when Galtung uses the notion of dominance, typically these two terms are used interchangeably. For the clearest examples, see "The War System," in *The True Worlds*; "Cultural Violence," p. 44; "On the Future of the Mediterranean," in *Transarmament and the Cold War*.

76 *The True Worlds*, p. 66.

Strip, with the recent Iraq-US/UK war, in the late 1990's Balkan conflict –

such overt domination illustrates how local and daily decision-making

processes outside of direct conflict are deeply altered and changed as a

result of militarized violence being woven into daily community life.

Another less overt form of structural violence is the process of

militarization itself – the sale and distribution of arms, the cultural

imperatives to build military support in terms of public education,

economic stimulus and growth, and uncritical patriotic national unity.

Such domination through the militarization of culture and politics becomes

evident through policy measures at all institutional levels. Whether it is

the repression of speech within public shopping malls, the curtailment of

civil liberties under new legislation (e.g. the Patriot Act I & II), or the

prohibition of teachers speaking out against government or military

activities in public schools, such social control over people underlies and

sustains unequal decision-making power (i.e. structural violence).

Structural violence then organizes activity and thus goes unnoticed and

unchallenged because of the overwhelming domination of militarization

over media, cultural and political discourses. Militarization, sexism,

racism, homophobia – these are all forms of structural violence in that they

unequally affect the freedom of activity of different groups and repress the

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ability of "underdogs" to have the same decision-making power as those in power over them.

To summarize Galtung's approach, structural violence is the inability for groups to actualize their own potential(s) when i) it is possible for them to do so, ii) it is by virtue of their group membership that their potential realizations are blocked or repressed, iii) they lack the ability to change the conditions that maintain the actual/potential realization gap. In looking at Galtung's understanding of structural violence as an "unequal exchange of needs currency" (i.e. exploitation) and an "unequal distribution of power" (i.e. domination), the relationship he maps out between violence and power is then clear. When violence and power are "on the same side," we can then articulate the reality of violence, and possible alternatives to it, in direct relation to the structural situatedness of social agents within particular historical conditions and practices.

Strengths and the range of influence of Galtung's notion of structural violence

As a starting point for considering a complex approach to violence, Galtung gives us a lot to consider and provides us with specific features of direct and structural violence. Structures do not discriminate at the level of

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individual agents or cause violence against particular persons vis-à-vis

their particularity but pick out persons by their membership in a particular

group. It is that membership which makes one vulnerable to, or insulated

from, a particular form of structural violence. Analyzing relations of

violence in this way between groups, and not simply as discrete acts of

violence done by one to another, loosens the elements of intentionality and

extreme direct action from our understanding of the origins and causes of

avoidable impediments to human freedom. In such cases of indirect

violence, structures are said to provide the conditions under which certain

groups are typically objects of violence without specific subjects causing

harms to those persons.

Galtung also clearly articulates how structural violence is related to

classical understandings of violence.[77] Galtung recognizes that violence

occurs outside of structural relationships and states that not all accounts of

direct violence are explainable in structural terms. Similarly, not all

instances of structural injustice are explainable in terms of an agent's

withholding of certain goods (i.e. intended needs deprivation). Galtung is

careful to keep these two forms of violence quite distinct so that it is clear

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77 Galtung classifies this approach similar to the way I characterized the "traditional approach" –
"...sudden bodily destruction at the hands of some actor who intends to exercise violence; in other
words, *direct violence* to the human body." See "Typologies of Violence," in *Transarmament and the
Cold War*, p. 271.

how structural violence involves something beyond accounts of direct violence. In this way, we can more clearly see a need for ways of explaining and understanding needs deprivation *as* violence at a level beyond immediate agent-to-agent relations.

Furthermore, if we are committed to a future of collective peace (however that commitment may be specifically understood), and do agree that the structural arrangements and organizing principles of our lives and institutions ought to be conducive for peaceful ends, then Galtung's account and motivation for developing an extended approach to violence squares up with these commitments. In focusing on the need for structural change, Galtung emphasizes the need to address issues of injustice, inequality, and violence at an institutional level outside of the immediate relations between particular individuals and groups. Not included here are the host of writings where Galtung relates structural violence to an understanding of direct and structural peace, mapping out ways of reducing inequality and needs deprivation with the goal of promoting peaceful social orders.[78]

Galtung is not alone in seeing value in broadening or extending our understanding of violence to include objectionable uses of power. Samuel S.

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78 See particularly *Peace Problems* (1988) and *Peace and World Structure* (1980) by Galtung.

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81 Ibid.,

Kim also attempts to extend violence beyond traditional understandings of the concept. In revising our understanding of war and peace beyond militarized global structures to include the ways that economic and political security policies increase the threat and presence of direct violence, we must, according to Kim, in turn reevaluate our understanding of violence itself.

> ...violence can be defined as a pathological element that destroys or diminishes life-sustaining and life-enhancing processes, hence the principal source of human insecurity. Violence may be direct, killing swiftly through war, or indirect, killing slowly and invisibly through poverty, hunger, disease, repression, and ecocide. Violence, like disease, is inherently anti-life, and is antithetical to human security.[79]

This "world order approach to violence"[80] is, like Galtung's account, attractive and useful for peace theorists in its scope and its orientation towards peace in terms of social health and the reduction of violence "as a social disease." In Kim's understanding, violence has multiple causes and is expressed in various forms, from killing to poverty and preventable disease. Also similar to Galtung, violence is used in many cases by "topdogs" and tends to move "downward on the ladder of social stratification as an instrument of social control and dominance."[81] Most broadly, violence is destructive of human life, is anti-development, and is "the principal source of human insecurity."

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79 "Global Violence and a Just World Order," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1984, p. 181.
80 Kim, p. 188.
81 Ibid., p. 182.

In his typology of different categories and forms of violence, Jamil Salmi explicitly draws on Galtung's notion of structural violence for his notions of indirect (i.e. "indirect violations of the right to survival"), repressive ("deprivation of fundamental rights"), and alienating ("deprivation of higher rights") violence.[82] Barbara Chasin, in her work on inequality and violence in the U.S. and Kerala, India, develops a more restrictive notion of structural violence from Galtung's account that seeks to address structural violence within a labor relations context. Accordingly, in order to understand violence, one must look at "patterns of inequality" and the ways in which "the distribution of wealth and power influence behavior."[83] Based on Galtung's notion of needs deprivation, Chasin recognizes structural violence as occurring "when peoples' lives are made demonstrably worse by their lack of access to resources."[84] While her notion of violence is more restrictive than Galtung's – acts resulting in physical harm to another person or persons – inequality is central to the general formula of structural violence. Finally, Nancy Fraser speaks of structural violence as:

> ...a range of deadly systemic social processes, responsibility for which cannot easily

82 Salmi, Jamil. *Violence and Democratic Society: New Approaches to Human Rights.* Zed Books: London, 1993, p. 23.
83 Chasin, Barbara. *Inequality and Violence in the United States: Casualties of Capitalism.* Humanities Books: New York, 1998, p. 9.
84 Ibid., p. 4.

be attributed to identifiable individual agents, but which culminate in massive harms such as malnutrition, medical neglect, and environmental toxicity.[85]

Arguing against Derrida's focus on the metaphysical critique of violence, Fraser shows how a political critique of structural violence identifies not just *any* possible form of violence, but rather identifies forms of violence that are *not* necessary within a particular social order. Using the U.S. constitution, legal case precedence, and the deep grammar of legal reasoning, she shows three specific ways that our legal discourse is structured to mask massive harms and forms of violent action against women that the courts are structurally blind to.

Despite this wide-spread reliance upon Galtung's approach, only two accounts directly analyze and evaluate Galtung's notion of structural violence. As previously stated, Coady (and indirectly Audi) provide us with a complex set of reasons why we ought to reject widened notions of violence, which would be useful to explore in some detail here. Along with Coady, Gordon Welty is another theorist who directly analyzes Galtung's understanding of violence, especially as it relates to social justice, inequality and domination. In what follows I will present a number of reasons to reject Galtung's notion of structural violence in order to clearly see some arguments against widening the concept of violence. In the

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85 Fraser, Nancy. "The Force of Law: Metaphysical or Political?" *Violence and Its Alternatives*, p. 86.

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process, it will be is clear to us just how restricted and narrow the notion of violence is that Coady and Audi operate from. In conjunction with these criticisms, I will present my own detailed criticisms of the restricted view and Galtung's approach to structural violence. Finally, I will provide a case for looking beyond immediate activity and localized contexts for understanding the presence and phenomena of violence within particular relations of power that is distinctive from Galtung's approach.

Restricting the concept of violence: engaging with Galtung's critics

For Coady, any talk of "structural" violence reflects a reliance on the wide understanding and definition of violence. Accordingly, Coady states that these definitions of violence typically serve "the interest of the political left by including within the extension of the term 'violence' a great range of social injustices and inequalities."[86] The problem with adopting the notion of structural violence is threefold: i) one is calling unjust social arrangements violence when no personal violence (i.e. the "restricted" sense of violence[87]) is present; ii) one understands ordinary person-to-person violence as stemming from "pronounced social or structural causes

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86 Coady, "The Idea of Violence," p. 24.
87 Coady defines this sense of violence as follows – "those which concentrate upon positive interpersonal acts of force usually involving the infliction of physical injury." (p. 24)

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(e.g. police harassment of racial minorities, race riots, prison brutality...)
"[88]; iii) a readiness to resort to counterviolence against "structural violence" within social life.

His criticisms are as follows. First, Coady states that "the similarities between personal violence and structural violence seem to be far too few and too general to offset the striking differences between them."[89] Similarly, we find Audi also making this point, though not in direct objection to Galtung's account. For Audi, it is those with "a strongly Marxist orientation" who would include cases where disapproval of a particular social situation is being expressed and sympathetic with it being changed so as to erase these undesirables. The kinds of harms or injuries are "terribly different" in that the former cases are positive acts of violence (e.g. hitting, slapping, biting someone) while illustrated cases of structural violence in the literature are usually unintended harms resulting from a failure to act (e.g. not giving to Oxfam and having more children die in India).[90] In the latter cases, Coady, like Audi, understands this problem of widening violence as one of taking a metaphorical usage of violence too literally. Concisely put, Audi presents this point as he resists treating

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88 Coady, p. 26.
89 Coady, p. 28.
90 Coady, p. 30.

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discrimination and exclusion as forms of violence.

> Some speak of American society as doing violence to the Negro [*sic*], referring to pervasive discrimination and exclusion, however peacefully maintained. Perhaps this should be regarded as a metaphorical way of expressing disapproval, and many are inclined to be sympathetic with it as such. But taken literally it would reveal conceptual confusion. To be sure, if enough people came to use 'violence' to refer to what standard usage would now be called (nonviolent) infringement of certain rights, we would have to acknowledge a new sense of 'violence.' But it is difficult to see how we would gain by this. We would increase the risk of ambiguity and equivocation; and we would also increase the temptation, to which too many already succumb, of substituting a vague and general term of disapproval for one which, like 'discriminatory hiring,' describes the specific grievance needing attention.[91]

According to Audi, the wide approach to violence equates violence with an "infringement of certain rights" and thereby risks collapsing a traditional understanding in terms of excessive or extreme intended actions which leads to harm with an understanding of violence as basic obstructions to the observance of political, social and civil rights.

From Galtung's definition of violence, there is little substance to the objection that his extended notion of violence would increase the risk of equivocation. Given the generality of his definition of violence and the clear dichotomy between structural violence (i.e. indirect, unintended violence) and personal violence (i.e. direct, intended violence), Galtung goes to great lengths to argue that direct violence occurs within an immediate relationship between agents while structural violence results from routinized practices and distributions of power.

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91 Audi, p. 67.

However, there is an overly wide scope to the terms he uses to define violence (i.e. impediments, potential vs actual realizations) and this allows him to include outcomes many would not consider to be instances of violence. Audi's charge that an extended sense of violence which includes rights infringements would be substituting a vague and general term for more specific terms does apply to Galtung's definition of violence. In his most recent essays, Galtung continues to conceptualize violence in ways that are consistent with his original definition of violence – *any avoidable impediment to self-realization.*[92] Being inadvertently locked in a room for a number of hours, being hit by an errant rock from someone scrambling up a hill above, being cheated out of money by phony solicitors, or being harmed by any other "avoidable impediments or influences" that keeps one from actualizing her/his potential realizations are all understood in this approach as violence. While some of these cases may be cases of harm, and they may have resulted in injury, calling these cases violence stretches this concept to include the impact of any avoidable obstacles, regardless of intent or of the cause of the obstacle. Having such a broad understanding of violence will do little for political theorists trying to distinguish violence from other kinds of activity, both analytically and normatively. Anytime we

92 See "Cultural Violence", p. 292.

enter into a communicative relation with another agent there are bound to be some of our potentials that go unactualized due to unintended or intended obstructions. Each party may end up only actualizing a portion of their hopes and desires and have other potential realizations blocked by a negotiated settlement. In such a case, Galtung considers impediments to these realizations as violence. Even in a less politically contentious situation than say, for example, the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, violence could be said to occur under Galtung's account if one's freedom is limited. So, for example, if a talkative person is continually interrupted and silenced in meetings (especially if he is prone to such dominating conversational habits), he does not actualize *his* potential to relate *his* thoughts, feelings and knowledge to others. To call this kind of silencing or interruption by the meeting facilitator *violence* ignores the historic relations of power (i.e. organization of social and gendered privilege). Freedom, which I would assume is on par with "actualizing one's potential realizations" for Galtung, is of high social value, but must be weighed relative to many other competing social values (such as substantiative equality and mutual respect in the above case). Impediments to one's freedom are not equal to being objects of violence. There are a host of cases

whereby individuals have particular freedoms limited or obstructed and yet no perceivable and avoidable harms occur.

Similar considerations hold regarding Kim's notion of violence. If violence is anti-development, anti-life, and signifies a deprivation of needs, then it ends up being anything which does not promote one's own individual or communal conception of development, life, or needs (as Kim does not provide an explicit notion of "pro-life" or "pro-development"). Articulating violence as a form of the unjust organization or distribution of power, as Galtung and Kim do, excludes not only the ways that individuals can resist and change their own conditions, but also reduces violence (which here includes all social evils) down to the ways that power is organized. With such an understanding of this relationship, through the regulation of power we could achieve peaceful societies free of, as Kim discusses, "diseases, human insecurity, hunger, repression, war and ecocide." This notion of violence, similar to Galtung's notion of structural violence, conflates the harmful effects of power upon people with unjust forms of power itself.

As a result, the understanding of violence as "any avoidable impediment to one's potential realization" or as "anti-life" includes far too many cases which are more accurately explained through other concepts

(e.g. discrimination, oppression, etc.). Instead of trying to organize all instances of recognized social injustice beneath a broad umbrella concept (which seems to be the motivation for Galtung and Kim's overextended notions of violence), concepts ought to clarify the significant moral and political dimensions of social relations. Though it may be a desirable goal to have such a broad concept of violence for peace research, thereby having a unified approach that is peace-conducive, it is a highly undesirable state of conceptual affairs for political theory, as Audi illustrates above. Categorizing injustices of oppression, discrimination, marginalization, and even an infringement of rights as sub-categories of violence stretches our historical understanding of violence well beyond already highly contested boundaries, especially in international contexts where notions of violence themselves have multiple meanings (e.g. *Gewalt* is translated as force, power or violence) and diverse normative understandings (e.g. socially-acceptable levels of violence used by the military, police, demonstrators or the penal system punishment of so-called offenders). When we are faced with violence in international contexts and forced to judge the actions or policies of particular people or institutions, thereby creating new policy measures or carrying out specific actions as a result of such judgments, then we ought to retain a clear understanding of violence across differing

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linguistic-political communities. Recalling the UN's struggle to find a mediating role in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Belgian, Canadian, Ghanaian, Kenyan, and German UN troops along with Hutu moderates and Tutsi's sought to intervene when the possibility of human rights violations, particularly the threat of *direct violence*, was on the horizon. Under chapter 6 situations, "particularly serious violations such as arbitrary killings, torture and large scale forced evictions would ordinarily deserve particular attention and rapid follow-up."[93] After the weapons cache of arms and machetes were found in the Presidential palace in early 1994 (a clear sign of the *violence* to come), the judgment to intervene was quite clear to those immersed in the situation and the troops were uncompromising in their choice to stay and try to halt the impending violence despite UN headquarter disapproval. With such a complex international political situation being judged by those with differing ideas of violence and peace, maintaining a clear association with the condition of bodily harm, injury and violation is of ever greater importance to cross-cultural communication and interaction with regard to intervening on the behalf of others to eradicate violence and bring about peace.

The second criticism made by restrictivists against the wide

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93 "Training Manual on Human Rights Monitoring – Chapter VI: Identification and Prioritization of Efforts Regarding Human Rights Violations," Section A. 1.

approach to violence is that the relationship between violence and social

injustice (i.e. structural violence for Galtung) and how these relate to

morality are different. For Galtung, structural violence is always unjust.

Coady's case of "domestic violence" (e.g. striking or incapacitating a person

who brutalizes a family member) may be morally legitimate whereas it

would seem quite contradictory to say that certain social injustices are ever

morally legitimate.[94] Thus, those who use violence are not *prima facie*

engaging in a morally illegitimate act, as Galtung seems to presume. Since

Coady assumes that claims of social injustice signify a social evil and if the

failure to act against injustice is also a social evil (which is Galtung's

position, according to Coady), to call inaction within political and social

affairs always immoral or evil would be inaccurate and unrealistic, given

the complex burdens and responsibilities actors have within the political

and social spheres.

Galtung would argue that it is not inaction vis-a-vis immediate acts

that is pertinent to an extended account of violence (since he does not focus

on individual activity) but rather structural impediments that lead to

systematic neglect, indifference and marginalization. Given Coady's strict

orientation towards violence in terms of direct action, any inaction is

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94 The example used to illustrate this point is poorly chosen. Such a case would be more accurately
   described as domestic *counter*violence.

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perceived at the same level of analysis, thus casting an extended approach to violence as one which assumes that violence is the primary social evil that must be addressed first in all cases of *individual* choices and actions. Instead, Galtung understands inaction within cases of structural violence as a matter of the lack of power certain groups have in organizing against and ending social injustice. If a society routinely spends its scarce resources on stockpiling weapons when its people are starving and in need of basic goods (i.e. clean water, adequate housing, electricity, etc.), and those starving people have no recourse or means to change their unjust situation, it is this kind of social inaction on the part of the elites that is violence.

Nevertheless, when discussing the relationship between violence and social injustice, Galtung's approach is again plagued with serious problems. In addition to increased analytic vagueness, Galtung's notion of violence strives to be a normative meta-category which can overcome complex judgments about violence. Arguing that Galtung's definition of violence is cast in explicitly normative terms to include such a wide range of phenomena, Gordon Welty states that "his definition incorporates not only positive terms (e.g. somatic state, mental state) but also ideal terms

(e.g. full human potential)."[95] As such, there is an ideal state of affairs that

Galtung appeals to that is, at best, not clearly realizable by even those in

just and peaceful orders. Calling a situation violence where the satisfaction

of needs are not met, to take one aspect of such an ideal state of affairs,

dualistically casts a peaceful social order as being free from violence. Since

a peaceful social order is the primary goal for Galtung's work on violence,

and peace is understood as "the absence of violence,"[96] then violence should

not, and cannot, be a means used to attain peaceful ends, much less an

element found within such an order. Under Galtung's approach then we

are left with a conceptual and moral universe based upon peace as the

absence of violence (which, for Galtung, itself encompasses most, if not all,

social evils). Peaceful means then are exclusively sanctioned when seeking

to attain human fulfillment and freedom. As it seems then, by adding an

understanding of violence where no actors or motivations propagate and

facilitate violence, we can include personal as well as structural and

institutional forms of injustice. As such, violence is never legitimate or

justifiable as a means or end within social orders.

In response, there are two particular theorists, mindful of

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95 Welty, Gordon. *Peace, Justice, and Structural Violence: A Critique of Galtung*, presented at the 19th Annual Conference of COPRED, pg. 3.
96 Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," p. 167.

maintaining a complex approach to violence, that argue against such a

dualistic view of peace and violence as Galtung and Kim take. First, given

the widespread presence of violence within civil society we must face the

fact that reductions and curtailments of violence cannot always be attained

by peaceful means. As John Keane states:

> Given the potentially unpredictable ('good' and 'bad') consequences of the decision to use or not to use violence for certain defined ends, a contemporary political theory of violence is well advised to reject both pacifism and the fetish of violence. Both indulge the same philosophical, strategic and tactical absolutism, and both therefore cloud and dangerously confuse an already complex ethico-political issue, even potentially *increasing* the probability of violence in human affairs.[97]

Given the fact that we live in a world where groups indiscriminately kill

themselves and other random people for their own political, religious or

moral ends, violence is part of the political tactics of certain groups. Also,

that some groups justify violence against any individual living according to

mores not compatible with their own, and that crime, genocides, murders,

and maiming are found in the vast majority of societies in one form or

another, violence is a reality that must be confronted and changed if we are

to realize more just and sustainable peaceful societies (i.e. civil society for

Keane, as opposed to *un*civil society). Whether violence can be justified as a

means for attaining just and peaceful ends is an open question according to

Keane's approach. Preserving the basic affinity between nonviolence and

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97 Keane, ibid., p. 89.

civil society, Keane argues that the use of violence can be deemed "good" "only when it effectively serves as a means of the creation or strengthening of a pluralistic, nonviolent civil society secured by publicly accountable political-legal institutions, that is, when violence serves to *reduce* or to *eradicate* violence."[98] In conjunction with this point, Hannah Arendt argues that while power is inherent within political communities, "violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate. Its justification loses in plausibility the farther its intended end recedes into the future."[99] In cases of self-defense, violence is justified, especially in cases of unprovoked violence (e.g. direct assault upon one's body by an attacker). When one's autonomy, safety and health are immediately and evidently threatened, neutralizing or ending the threat through whatever means is justified when the end is simply to maintain the status quo before such an assailant forced themselves upon oneself. Extending this case to a structural level, there is no clear and persuasive *prima facie* moral imperative against the use of violence for self-defense for communities that are invaded by those who seek to uproot, displace and replace those populations (e.g. Rio Negro massacres of the early 1980's in Guatemala, slaughterings of Kurdish

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98 Ibid., p. 91.
99 Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 52.

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communities by Baath Party soldiers and loyalists). Depending upon the

threat and the efficacy of violence in maintaining safety within one's own

community[100], these means may bring about greater peace overall by

reducing threats of violence at the outset. Ethical judgments of violence in

a world riddled by contradicting forces and competing values cannot be

reduced to either/or dilemmas. To cast violence as never legitimate nor

justifiable in seeking the ends of a peaceful social order ignores the

political realities faced by populations of people who have no recourse to

social and political injustice but to resist and work against injustice with

their own bodies and voices. While peaceful, nonviolent means are to be

desired, in articulating a notion of violence we must avoid the idealized

poles of absolute pacifism and glorified violence. Within an ethics of

violence, we must admit that "there are times and places when the

deployment of violence by whole groups against their opponents may serve

as a basic condition of building or developing a civil society marked by

tolerance, pluralism and democratic procedures."[101] "Post-foundationalist

thinking" about violence then recognizes the value of nonviolent solutions

to conflict and violence, but also recognizes violence as necessary in certain

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100 Here I am using the notion of community, instead of nation, in order to clarify how self-defense at a
structural level is justified, given the invasion of a geographically, culturally, and in some cases
ethically, unified area.
101 Keane, p. 74.

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instances. It avoids categorical imperatives about violence which only

obscure reasoned judgments by those actors in the midst of situations of

violence in favor of deliberation and judgment formulated within "the

unique conditions of specific temporal and spatial contexts."[102]

Finally, Coady argues that if we are to hold that the means of

violence are in some cases justified to use against violence, then endorsing

wide definitions of violence are likely to have "undesirable practical

consequences".[103] Justifications of violence usually rely on the claim that a

specific act of violence is justified because it will reduce violence overall. If

then that justification exists for using violence against structural violence,

then wouldn't violence overall increase? If we are to grant that violence

operates at a structural level beyond direct human activity (i.e. by persons

not doing things, violence increases), and this usage becomes commonplace,

then justifications of self-defense and revolutionary goals will actually

create a world where violence vastly increases overall. Our

conceptualization of violence has political consequences for justifying

certain political actions. By recognizing structural violence as a reality that

must be dealt with, counterviolence will become increasingly difficult to

argue against. As Coady states this conundrum,

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102 Keane, p. 92.
103 Coady, p. 31.

> ...it may well be that quite different techniques, strategies and remedies are required to deal with social disorder of (restricted) violence than are needed to deal with such issues as wage injustice, educational inequalities and entrenched privilege. The use of the wide definition seems likely to encourage the cozy but ultimately stultifying belief that there is one problem, the problem of (wide) violence, and hence it must be solved as a whole with one set of techniques.[104]

Simply because there may be undesirable moral responses to the recognition of violence as a widespread phenomena shouldn't block theorists from accurately and consistently describing such phenomena that has moral and ethical importance to a culture. If political theorists only used concepts that had desirable practical consequences, then terms like genocide, holocaust, mass rape and other terms of mass violence ought not to be used as they may "justify certain political actions" against perpetrators of violence, or those groups associated with the spread of violence.

We are now in a position to see that Galtung's notion of violence is far too vague and inclusive to be distinctively useful for theoretical understanding of violence in relation to other key political concepts and that a complex approach to violence must recognize that *a priori* moral and ethical judgments about violence for itself have no place within approaches that seek to understand violence in relation to power. Before moving on to propose an alternative approach to structural violence that overcomes the

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104 Coady, p. 32.

objections laid out above, I will articulate two substantial objections in order to show why Galtung's account of structural violence is inadequate.

Galtung's mechanistic account of social structures and human actions

Galtung's understanding of structural violence is violence which is indirect, unintended and independent of the actions or motivations of particular people (i.e. the invariance of structure with regard to subject substitution). Galtung's notion of structural violence is oriented towards conceptualizing violence as "built into the structure". Galtung articulates the claim in two distinct writings:

> The major distinction is...between person-to-person and structure-to-person violence...According to the former, violence is something one actor does to others; according to the latter, violence is built into the structure...[105]

> These are settings [where structures, and not actors, are the cause of violence] within which individuals may do enormous amounts of harm to other human beings without ever intending to do so, just performing their regular duties as a job defined in the structure. Social-political consciousness is to understand how the structure works, an important step in the transformation of such structures.[106]

Galtung states here that structures determine the effects upon individuals within certain groups. As shown earlier, the structure deprives individuals from "bringing their power to bear against the topdogs."[107] Those

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105 Galtung, *The True Worlds*, p. 24.
106 Galtung, *Search for Peace*, p. 145.
107 Galtung. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," p. 177.

individuals who are forced into particular situations where their choices

are predetermined for them by a structure not of their own choosing are

the objects of structural violence. As such, the way the power structure is

set up to benefit certain groups and disadvantage others (in the best cases)

or to preserve certain groups and kill off others (in the worst of cases) is of

serious consequence.

Underlying then Galtung's relationship between power and violence

is a mechanistic understanding of structures as determinants of human

action and social life. To argue that we must almost exclusively focus on

structures in order to overcome the needs deprivations of individuals

ignores and obfuscates the agency of individuals and their roles within

these structures. Within Galtung's account, we are left thinking that

unintended, indirect violence operates independent of subjective activity.

These forces that bear down upon individuals within positions of power

and powerlessness then predetermine the outcomes of general kinds of

activities. Yet, when we study empirical cases closely and analyze how

agents are shaped by and interact with one another and the structures that

organize their activities, it is clear that violence is not easily understood in

the dichotomous way of direct vs. structural violence. Structural violence

may involve the intentions and wills of particular agents within particular

roles and positions in a set of structures. For example, the bureaucratic act of the pen may set in motion the death of a prisoner (a governor authorizing, and the state personnel carrying out, the execution of an inmate on death row). This would be a case whereby the structural violence of capital punishment is directly related to the actions of individuals. The underlying legal structures which make possible these instances of direct violence may be upheld by the courts, in which case the judges decide to rule against the abolition of the death penalty and thereby indirectly – in a more mediated fashion – make possible the structural violence of state executions. In such a case, the decisions and actions of individuals in particular roles maintain the structure that causes the violence. From such a simple case, we can see then that, unlike Galtung's account, we must analyze how intentions and direct actions are involved within structural violence.

Furthermore, Galtung's ignores how collectively organized and self-consciously motivated groups in positions of powerlessness can in fact resist and change particular structural arrangements. With concerted activity designed to overcome conditions that generate violence against them, these groups are able to change structures in ways that can in fact serve their own collective interests, even if the relations of power are

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relatively unaffected. If we are to follow Galtung's reasoning about structural violence as unintentional, indirect impediments, we'll end up viewing structures as determinants *above* social actors instead of seeing a dialectical relationship between structures and action with regard to instances of violence.

We ought to conceptualize the relationship between structures and violence dialectically, recognizing the fact that structures organize the conditions for violence within particular relations of power *and* that the material choices of particular agents affect and change the very structures that organize their activity. Roy Bhaskar illustrates this with an example through the participation in the institution of marriage: "people do not marry to reproduce the nuclear family or work to sustain the capitalist economy. Yet it is nevertheless the unintended consequence (and inexorable result) of, as it is also a necessary condition for, their activity."[108] In some cases individuals reproduce structural arrangements without consciously doing so. In other cases, individuals may consciously choose to use violence in order to ensure a maintenance and perpetuation of the structural organization of that particular institution. Either way, there is a dialectical interplay between structure and action such that structures

108 Bhaskar, Roy. *The Possibility of Naturalism*, Hemel Hempstead, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989a, p. 35.

precondition the actions of individuals and yet the choices that individuals do make in their roles within particular structures effects and changes the structures themselves. Consequently, we must analyze the relationship between structures and actions in order to clarify what it means to say that violence operates at a structural level.

Reducing violence to power in Galtung's account

We have already seen how Galtung uses the language of "topdogs" and "underdogs" to describe the ways that different groups are situated within the power structure. From this language and characterization of groups within different positions of these social structures we find that violence is reduced to particular distributions of power. That is, power is viewed by Galtung as a resource, something which can be possessed, distributed and horded. Given his notion of domination in terms of the distribution of power and his corresponding claims that the unequal distribution of this resource is structural violence, one is led to believe that a social order free from structural violence would be one where power was equally distributed to all members. Those who possess power are those least likely to be objects of structural violence. The degree to which one

lacks such power determines the amount of violence one will suffer under. If a society then equalizes the distribution of power, all will possess equal amounts of it and thereby equally be objects of structural violence or structural peace. As a result, structural violence could be collectively reduced since all have the power to end such avoidable needs deprivations (and presumably such a collective choice to end suffering would be in their immediate interest). As it turns out, structural violence is then, in principle, a phenomena under the control of those in positions of power, thus showing that agents have a hand in the continuation or the eradication of conditions of violence, even if they are not responsible for its particular manifest occurrences. Are we then to assume that the reality of violence does in fact follow from the organization of the distribution of power?

As I showed previously, the "unequal exchange of needs currency" and the "unequal distribution of power" are themselves different ways of understanding structural violence for Galtung. Stemming from his notion of violence and his understanding of power, Galtung reduces the relations of violence to forms of unjust power distribution or exchange. As noted, Galtung does not seek to substantiate that deliberate or intentional unequal distributions of power occurs, nor that groups are intentionally

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deprived of their needs, but rather that particular groups have a certain degree of power, while others do not, and those with power use it for their own benefit, while others are not afforded such privileges. Consequently, routinized relations which block or impede individuals from making choices to actualize certain possible outcomes, when such impediments are avoidable, is violence, in spite of the actions or motivations of any subject of violence. Assuming then that these distributions of power were equalized and the exchange currency gap of needs satisfaction was closed up, violence would be eliminated.

As I will show in the final chapter, this identification of power with violence must be challenged. First, domination may in fact always coincide with or rely upon the material occurrence of violence, but this is not to say that violence and domination are coterminous. The vast majority of instances of domination involve some form or another of psychological, economic, environmental, physical or political violence. Militarism involves ecological destruction, human death, mass rape, population displacement and starvation. Racism promotes "second class citizenship, where the subjected group (not necessarily a "minority") is forced to express dominant culture and not its own..."[109] It is the psychological destruction of the

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109 Galtung, "Cultural Violence," p. 41.

racialized person as valueless and without self-worth. And yet, violence is

a distinctive phenomenon not reducible to these power relations. Our

understanding of domination relations and our understanding of relations

of violence differ in the ways that agents are situated and the way that

people are affected by these relations. In the case of domination, certain

groups are able to determine and shape the production of knowledge to an

extent that other groups are not, thus legitimizing their actions and

policies, despite destructive and brutal outcomes of such decisions. In the

case of corporate domination of public information, especially in times of

international crisis and conflict, we find that what counts as violence and

what counts as legitimate force within political and legal discourses is

highly dependent upon the specific actions and context. Faced with

demonstrators, violence ends up being the blocking of the transportation of

goods (e.g. the West Coast Longshore workers blocking of consumer goods

at the docks in 1999 and early 2002) or the obstruction of the free

movement of business and recreational travel (e.g. the blockading of San

Francisco and Toronto streets in business districts in May 2002) while

force is the beating, pepper spraying, tear gassing and shooting of "violent

agitators" by police and private security forces. Faced with armed guerrilla

fighters with an explicit political agenda for revolutionary change, violence

tends to be the provocations and acts of violence done by the non-state

sanctioned groups, while bombings, imprisonments without trial,

indiscriminate killings, and such are displays of force designed to "liberate"

and "keep the peace". Corporate domination of public information with

regard to the language of violence and force then in this context is not itself

structural violence. Rather, such ubiquitous power over information does in

fact tacitly justify police violence and does, however unintended, suppress

the need for future justification of such brutal repression of public

assemblies. Such ideological usage of these concepts structures public

discourses in ways that affect dissident and politically underrecognized

communities.

In short, structural violence is not simply "the most flagrant

manifestation of power," but rather recognizes that organized relations of

power function to perpetuate or suppress instances and relations of

violence. Relying on Foucault and Marcuse, I will put forward a notion of

domination that clearly maps out how agents are situated in relation to

structural forces and yet show how violence is a distinctive phenomena

from domination. Second, exploitation also relies upon instances and

threats of violence, but to say that exploitation is a necessary feature of the

relationship between capital and labor is quite distinct from saying that

structural violence is a necessary feature of that relationship. Using Marx's

understanding of exploitation, I will show how violence is an integral

though distinctive phenomenon from exploitation.

Need for an alternative account of structural violence

Finally, given Galtung's overly vague notion of violence, this

mechanistic account of structure, and his reduction of violence to power, we

are now in a position to understand why we must jettison his notion of

structural violence. According to the evidence above, we can understand it

in the following way:

> *Structural violence* – unintended and indirect constraints (i.e. structures) impeding
> people from their own self-realization when those structures themselves are not natural
> and immutable.

If we are to accept such a definition, then as I have shown we are

committed to an understanding of structural violence that is an umbrella

concept for other forms of injustice – oppression, marginalization,

inequality, exploitation, domination and repression. Galtung himself seems

comfortable with such an arrangement of our concepts within political

theory.

> ...if there were reasons to believe that inequality, injustice, exploitation,
> penetration, fragmentation and marginalization were something given by nature,
> something forever beyond the power of man to counteract, then I would not speak of

violence.[110]

As we can see, violence in this case can "stand in" for any of the previous six terms. Since he sees violence as "anything avoidable that impedes personal growth,"[111] and that this violence is built into structures, then any unintended or indirect constraint on an individual's "personal growth" is structural violence. This conclusion leads us to calling all kinds of undesirables structural violence and loosing any distinctive understanding of violence at a structural level.

In the next chapter, I will articulate both our need to retain the notion of structural violence, noting that there are a number of important philosophical and political benefits, and some reasons for extending our understanding of violence in this direction. Relying upon Marx's notion of structure implicit within his analysis of the commodity-form, I will provide an explicit account of social structures and the relationship they have with social activity. By clarifying this relationship, we will be in a position to look at my alternative account of structural violence that recognizes the role that structures *and* human agents play in maintaining and perpetuating avoidable, socially-caused harms and/or injuries (and not simply "needs deprivations" or "avoidable impediments to human freedom")

110 Galtung, *The True Worlds*, p. 25.
111 Galtung, *The True Worlds*, p. 24.

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against particular social groups.

Conclusion

Galtung's introduction of the notion of structural violence aids

political theory in moving beyond subject-action dependency of traditional

approaches and explicitly situates violence within the context of a wider

discussion of power, domination, exploitation and inequality. By extending

violence beyond direct activity and localized contexts, judgments and

discourses about violence as well as actions and policies designed to reduce

violence are confronted with a model that situates violence at many levels

of analysis and social experience. From the microlevel aspects of broken

arms and battered faces to the marcrolevel "statistics" of death by cholera,

dysentery, and dehydration, Galtung's stratified theoretical approach to

violence is useful to political theorists who seek to understand violence in

its many manifestations.

However, we are left with a few problems within Galtung's account

that must be remedied. First, if we are to retain a useful and rigorous

notion of structural violence, we first ought to adopt a more restrictive

notion of violence than the one provided by Galtung. While there is an

attraction to Galtung's notion of violence for its pliability and generality, it lacks distinctiveness necessary for carefully relating violence to other key concepts within political theory. If we are interested in issues of social justice, as Galtung is, then being clear on what violence is and how violence itself affects people should be of primary importance. As I will restate in the final chapter, we ought to retain the condition that violence involves avoidable harms and not just impediments or obstacles to one's freedom.

Second, we ought to adopt a clear dialectical understanding of the relationship between structures and action. By seeing structures as preconditions and also reproduced outcomes, of action, we can see that the choices individuals make and the activities they engage in do not mechanistically follow from the conditions or structures they are situated within. These choices are shaped now and in the future by present deliberations and by the ways in which these kinds of situations and agents are situated in terms of historical choices and outcomes (i.e. present social activity is historically situated). While we have seen here that Galtung implicitly recognizes the causal efficacy of structures within our social world, the mechanistic relationship he maps out from structures to action leaves unanswered how violence itself operates at a structural level

as an "influence" or "force" within social relations *and* what role social

actors play or don't play within structural violence.

Third, we need to be clear how violence itself is a distinctive

phenomenon from power – how power itself either facilitates or blocks

particular relations of violence and how violence sustains or undermines

organized power relations. Within Galtung's account, structural violence is

simply the "unequal distribution of power" and the "unequal access to

resources". As a result, we are left with an account that reduces violence to

particular power relations.

Instead of seeking a renewed *a priori* definition of violence in order

to address this issue, I will propose a conception of structural violence that

is mindful of perceivable physical harms and injuries to particular persons,

that recognizes how persons can be victims or objects of violence when it is

not meaningful to say that there is a subject perpetuating violence, and

that also recognizes the socially contingent nature of violence (i.e. the

condition of avoidability within a conception of violence). With such a

conception of structural violence, we will not stray overly far from

historical understandings of and consensus around the concept of violence

itself, but we will also extend our understanding of the ways that violence

is perpetuated and maintained within and beyond complex social relations

and institutions. In what follows then is my alternative conception of structural violence that explicitly details the relationship between structures and action and that also sharply distinguishes (and yet maintains) the close relationship between violence and power.

Chapter Three: Social structures and social actions: understanding violence at a structural level

...at each stage of history there is found a material result, a sum of productive forces, a historically created relation of individuals to nature and to one another, which is handed down to each generation from its predecessors, a mass of productive forces, capital and circumstances, which is indeed modified by the new generation, but which also prescribes for it its conditions of life and gives it a definite development, a special character.[112]

From this standpoint the structures which constitute human behaviour are not in reality universally given facts, but specific phenomena resulting from a past genesis and undergoing transformations which foreshadow a future evolution.[113]

We have analyzed differing conceptions of violence and shown that we must extend our understanding of violence beyond immediate acts by particular subjects restricted to specified contexts. We also must develop a notion of violence that distinguishes morally and politically significant kinds of harms and injuries from other socially undesirable phenomena like exploitation, oppression and injustice. Also, we now see that being restricted to narrow conceptions of violence as somatic incapacitation or intentional and direct harm excludes many cases in which morally and politically significant injuries and violations occur. Analyzing violence at a structural level will help us understand how violence is routinely manifest within social relations despite the absence of direct and intentional acts of violence. The first task of this chapter is to show why we should develop a

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112 "The German Ideology," *Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker, New York: Norton & Co., 1972, pp. 128-9.
113 Lucien Goldmann, *Marxism and Social Sciences*, 1970, p. 21.

notion of structural violence notwithstanding the problems that plague Galtung's account. I will argue that the language of structure gives us a way to conceptualize instances of violence that are independent of the conscious understanding of individuals and their activities. Since we have no adequate way of thinking about violence that results from the unintended consequences of social practices, I will also argue that a structural level of analysis gives us a way to understand instances where unconscious social activity perpetuates violence against others. Finally, the recognition of violence at a structural level provides us with a clear target for political action that aims to reduce the pervasiveness of violence.

Following this general discussion about the need for a concept of structural violence, I will present a notion of structures that is useful for my alternative account of structural violence. Using Marx's conception of structure from his discussion of the commodity-form, I will first present his understanding of how value relations allow agents to confront objective forces which shape social relations that are nevertheless a function of their own historically variable activity. Second, I will discuss the conditions and practices which lead to contemporary unemployment. This discussion will demonstrate Marx's dialectical understanding of the relationship between social structures and human activity. In order to illustrate this

125

understanding, I will briefly present a case of unemployment resulting from a reorganization of productive activity based upon the value form.

In the next section, I will argue that in contrast to Galtung's mechanistic account of structures and social action, this account of structures recognizes the substantial interrelationship between structures and action. On the one hand, individuals and groups confront forces and constraints upon their social activity that are neither immutable nor overtly observable within the context of their social activities. These structures affect human activity in specific and general ways, thus determining and shaping human activity *prior to* any particular choices or deliberations made by any particular group. On the other hand, social structures themselves are conditioned and shaped by the actions and choices of individuals. While structures may organize and constrain social activity, social activity maintains, reproduces and also changes social structures. As such, there is a relationship between structures and actions whereby human activity is determined by the historical structures under which it is organized and conversely structures are shaped and conditioned by the present and future activity and choices of social groups.

To illustrate this dialectical understanding of the relationship between social structures and human activity, I will turn to detailed

126

example of "industrial accidents" within slaughterhouses to demonstrate two points: that violence is propagated without subjects acting against others and that violence is a perpetual reality resulting from the unconscious and unintentional activities that take place within these industries. From this example, we will then be in a position to see how my notion of structure and of violence is different both from traditional conceptions of violence we saw in chapter one and from Galtung's understanding of structural violence we explored in chapter two.

Need for a concept of structure

Despite the problems we encountered with Galtung's understanding of structural violence, there are still a number of reasons why we should retain a notion of structural violence for political theory. Returning to the third objection I made in chapter one against traditional theorists of violence, the harms and injuries which manifests itself between subjects goes unrecognized and untheorized as violence when we lack a clear method for analyzing forces and mechanisms which constrain and shape observable social relations. When we find that routine relations result in chronic injury and harm to others, whether it is made possible by the rules

and mandates of a particular institution or by the ordinary practices within social life outside of formal institutional contexts, the individual-action level of analysis is insufficient for understanding why such harms and injuries persistently occur. In these traditional approaches, workplace violence in the form of preventable death and injury resulting directly from neglect cannot be understood to be violence if the neglect was unintentional and the violence resulted from a state of affairs outside of an identifiable *and* forceful course of action that was the cause of violence. However, if harms and injuries are systematically propagated against certain groups and not others even when there are no identifiable subjects acting to bring about those harms and injuries, and if those harms and injuries are preventable and avoidable, then we have a case where unobservable forces and mechanisms organize the relations between subjects to make instances of violence likely or inevitable. While Coady may want to call such instances of hazards and injury "life" (given that no "forceful intrusions" occur in conjunction with these hazards and injuries), many cases of avoidable socially-caused injury and harm occur without subjects forcefully intruding upon the lives of others. Furthermore, from the object point of view, cases of unintended but avoidable and preventable harms and deaths are clearly instances of violence, despite the lack of an identifiable subject

128

who caused the violence. From "natural diseases" like dysentery, cholera, AIDS, polio, and others to "hazards" like factory maimings and industrial poisonings, we find detailed reasons why these instances of injury and harm are clearly preventable and avoidable. Working, then, from a level of analysis that recognizes violence against others via unintended and unconscious forces and mechanisms, we are able to theorize a vast number of cases of violence that traditional approaches are theoretically blind to.

Within this alternative approach, a structural level of analysis aids us in more completely explaining how these objective conditions of violence are manifest within social life. As Coady objects to the idea of structural violence by arguing that, given the complex burdens and responsibilities people have within social life, inaction cannot be considered to be violence. While we can understand this notion of inaction to be either a failure to act, when the need to act may present itself as necessary within a social context (e.g. standing by watching a person about to drown), or the lack of acting to prevent possible negative outcomes (e.g. failure of richer persons to give a portion of their resources to poorer persons), Coady seems to argue that it is the latter cases which would qualify as instances of structural violence . As a result, Coady dismisses claims of violence in cases where actors are *not* seeking to prevent possible negative outcomes.

As Coady articulates his understanding of structural violence, he states:

> If certain kinds of omission can count as violence then the way to structural violence is at least clearer since the damage done to people by the structures and institutions of their society can be seen as sustained by personal failures to act. Moreover a successful extension of the term 'violence' to cover omissions might make the further move to violence without individual agents more palatable. Clearly a good deal here turns upon how we determine the question of negative actions, but even if we allow that failure to give money to Oxfam (a favoured example in the literature) with the foreseeable consequence that someone in India dies is causing some person to die, it still does not follow that we do or must have the same interest in both kinds of deed.[114]

From Coady's individual-action level of analysis, structural violence is simply "negative actions" or the failure to act. Moving to a structural level of analysis, social outcomes are not simply understood in terms of acting or failing to act. Rather, one can act to bring about a desired state of affairs and, as a byproduct of that decision and action, bring about a set of unintended consequences which produce results above and beyond the sphere of their action and desired outcome. To call this inaction or a failure to act would be inaccurate. In one sense, there is no question of locating violence in terms of action/non-action. Instead, violence can result from the choices people make even in instances where peace is sought. The subjective intentions and choices do not encompass the entire scope of relations where we are able to recognize and analyze violence. Those objective outcomes which result from subjective activity, and thereby

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114 Coady, p. 29.

further organize and shape future activity, can themselves propagate

violence against others. As we will see in section three of this chapter,

analyzing violence at a structural level aids us in understanding how

violence comes about as an unintended consequence from routine social

activity.

Theorizing structural violence from a political standpoint

An additional reason to retain a notion of structural violence is that

the structural level of analysis gives us a political standpoint from which to

analyze manifestations of violence. Instead of treating these avoidable

socially-caused injuries and harms as hazards which are part of "life" or as

harms reducible to the actions and choices made by particular individuals,

we are able to analyze observable phenomena of violence in terms of

underlying mechanisms and forces which result from past and present

practices. By analyzing the details of particular social practices and the

corresponding relations of power with an eye to the violence brought about

by these practices and relations, we are able to theorize instances of

violence as resulting from historical struggles over competing interests and

ideologies. Structural violence is then understood as a feature of contingent

social processes. We should not only cast violence as an anomaly within social life, as Coady does, by distinguishing violence from hazards which are "part of life." Against Coady's understanding, violence is not limited to discrete areas of social life where immediate actions of particular subjects cause violence. Rather, we must also recognize the role that violence plays within the routine relations of ordinary life. An understanding of violence at a structural level provides political theorists with a way of articulating violence within struggles to establish or maintain peaceful social orders where violence is embedded within social and cultural practices (e.g. routine productive relations producing greater amounts of deadly forms of pollution).

Once we have established that instances of avoidable harms and injuries beyond immediate relations are political problems of violence analyzable at a structural level, then we have a target for political action to reduce instances of violence within routine relations. Instead of only addressing the actions (or failures to act) of individuals, we are able to present a notion of violence which brings to our awareness the need to address violence at a level beyond immediate social relations, particularly within the context of institutional life. In such cases, the charge of structural violence is against the conditions underlying social life and

embedded within patterns of institutional activity. By recognizing the fact

that structures do organize social experience and thus in many cases make

the outcome of violence likely or inevitable, we can address the problem

and apparent "permanence" of structural violence at an institutional and

collective level. As we will see in Marx's analysis of the commodity-form, an

analysis of the mechanisms that mediate relations between subjects is

necessary in order to understand the totality of relations within society,

whether it is economic relations of exchange and labor relations or, for our

purposes, relations of violence.

Structures emerging via commodity relations

The notion of structure within this context refers to a specific kind of

organization of relations between people and their practices. Structures

mediate relations between individuals through historical patterns and

systems of social practices. Structures are experienced as objective forces

confronting individuals, typically beyond one's own immediate ability to

evade such forces, shaping their choices and activities. Recognizing this

level of analysis and social reality then aids us in understanding those

mechanisms and forces which influence and shape social practice. Marx

provides us with a notion of structure along these lines that is useful for understanding violence beyond the individual-action level of analysis. In his analysis of the commodity-form and the wage-labor contract, Marx argues against the "vulgar economists" who ignore the underlying structures that organize and make possible the reification and fetishism of commodities as well as the extraction of surplus value from the labor process. A useful starting point for understanding this notion of structure in Marx is his discussion of the commodity-form from chapter one of *Capital*.

As producers move beyond personal relations of exchange (e.g. bartering) and begin to trade their goods within a competitive open market, there is a need for an objective basis of exchange which is distinct from the value of articles of utility evident within personal relations. Marx states that:

> this division of the product of labour into a useful thing and a thing possessing value appears in practice only when exchange has already acquired a sufficient extension and importance to allow useful things to be produced for the purpose of being exchanged, so that their character as values has already to be taken into consideration during production.[115]

Once the commodity-form becomes the dominant force within relations of exchange and once the social relations between producers are mediated by

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115 *Capital*, Vol. 1, introduced by Ernest Mandel and translated by Ben Fowkes. New York: Vintage Books, 1977, p. 166.

the ends of producing for exchange value, the social relations between producers are obscured by material relations between things within these market exchanges. As the exchange process between use values becomes more highly mediated (e.g. money as the universal medium of exchange; merchants mediating the exchange between producers; costs of distribution, research, and advertising added into the market price), objects take on lives of their own and value appears to come from some characteristic of the object itself.

Within the economic system of bartering, such a distortion doesn't occur given the transparency of personal relations between producers. The value of those products being exchanged and the actual human labor invested into them are evident and transparent to both buyer and seller. Within these simple relations, labor-time expended and the use value of the object to the buyer both organize and shape the outcome of negotiation and exchange between two such producers.

> So far as it is a use-value, there is nothing mysterious about it [a commodity], whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it satisfies human needs, or that it first takes on these properties as the product of human labor.[116]

Given such transparent practices of exchange that underlie such personal relations within bartering, if a dispute arises as to the unfairness of a low

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116 *Capital*, p. 163.

proposed buying price, the seller can simply appeal to these two organizing

conditions (i.e. amount of labor-time expended and the utility that the

object possesses).

However, once the transparency of the relations between producers

is much more highly mediated within a market setting, the material

relationship between commodities obfuscates the social nature of exchange.

As Marx states, "The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists

therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social

characteristics of men's own labor as objective characteristics of the

products themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things."[117]

Marx establishes in this first chapter that it is the social relations between

producers which determines the exchange value of commodities, and not

any "natural properties" of the object itself. This "phantom objectivity"

whereby objects are afforded certain powers, according to Lukács, conceals

under its seemingly all-embracing rationality "every trace of its

[commodity-structure] fundamental nature: the relation between persons."

[118] What appears then as a characteristic of the object "branded on its

forehead" turns out to in fact be the social determination of the value of

117 *Capital*, p. 164-5.
118 *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, Translated by Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968, p. 83.

that object via the socially necessary labor-time expended to produce that object.

> The determination of the magnitude of value by labour-time is therefore a secret hidden under the apparent movements in the relative values of commodities. Its discovery destroys the semblance of the merely accidental determination of the magnitude of the value of the products of labour, but by no means abolishes that determination's material form.[119]

Consequently, the socially uniform objectivity of value – the fact that all commodities are measured by a single value standard – organizes the exchange of commodities across space and time. This uniformity is attained, according to Marx, through a "certain customary stability." Being no fixed law for the determination of the price of a commodity across space and time, nor of the exact quantitative measure of a unit of human labor-time, we have a general method for determining the magnitude of value of commodities that is contingent upon the socially dynamic development of human labor-time (e.g. small vs. large scale industry, machinery vs. hand tool production, etc.). Instead of arguing for a scientistic account of the magnitude of value as derived from quantitative laws of exchange, Marx details how value in fact arises from material and social forces within economic relations.

Most importantly, from this brief exposition we can see how the

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119 *Capital*, p. 168.

commodity-form affects and structures the overall relationship of exchange between consumers, producers, and the objects intended for exchange. To briefly review, within commodity relations, the structures which shape market exchanges are much more obscure and operate without the conscious knowledge of producers. Within private labor activities, those same two producers who bartered must now, within commodity relations, produce in accordance with different mandates. Within the same concrete activity (e.g. weaving cloth), the social characteristic of their private labor takes on a different form, that of producing not only for use value, but also for exchange value. Yet, exchange value can only be realized through the act of exchange, where "the products of labour acquire a socially uniform objectivity as values..."[120] In the context of such exchanges, the social basis of the value of commodities – arising from abstract human labor and an object's utility – are obscured by what appears to be a relationship between the products themselves. That is, objects seem have social relations while producers seem to only have material relations. Given the organization of these commodity relations between producers, they no longer have direct control over the determination of value of their goods through a system of personal exchange. The reality of exchange which was once dependent

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120 *Capital*, p. 166.

upon personal relations now develops as an independent reality confronting producers as a force beyond their immediate control and choices. The objective conditions of market exchange of commodities then confront these producers as "natural" forces outside of their immediate sphere of control and influence that structures their activities. While value in fact is a "definite social manner of expressing the labour bestowed on a thing," value appears to those within the marketplace to be bound up with the material object itself, independent of human labor and relations. Consequently, the inversion that occurs between the relations between things and the relations between producers masks the actual social characteristics of labor and value within the exchange process.

From this analysis of Marx's understanding of the commodity-form, we can see how structures shape and change social activity in ways beyond the immediate choices of particular agents. As forces independent of social activity, structures confront individuals as forces they can't directly control through social action. Given the relative independence and obscurity of the way that structures operate, we must analyze those patterns of activity and organizations of relations which underlie agent's choices and activities in order to capture the affects these structures have upon individuals. Within the next section we will see how this understanding of social reality

aids us in analyzing ways that structures organize labor relations, generate

new classes of disposable persons, and set the conditions for increases of

violence overall.

Unemployment and the commodity-form

Moving beyond this description of the way that the commodity-form

structures economic relations of exchange, we can also see how commodity

relations and forces of production structures other aspects of economic life,

like unemployment. At an individual-action level of analysis,

unemployment simply boils down to either the relationship between an

employer and an employee, the nature and choices of the employee

herself/himself, or the relationship between the employee and the owners

of that company. Whether or not she keeps her job depends both upon her

skills and adherence to the job requirements as well as the relationship she

has with her employers and the need that her employers have for her

particular skills set. What this level of analysis fails to account for is that

unemployment is a situation which also arises, in many more cases, out of

objective market and political forces. As we see a pattern of capital and

manufacturing flight today, a shift away from nationalized production and

investment dependent upon national labor populations to an international system of production and distribution based upon transitory capital, the conditions of employment and unemployment are much less understandable or explainable in terms of SAO relations. Multinational corporations argue that they must "remain competitive within the global marketplace," they must "streamline costs and increase efficiency," and they must produce in accord with "the best interest of the company." As a result, reasons of international market competition and the need for greater guarantees of profitability underlie increases in unemployment. As the patterns of corporate movement to lower wage-labor areas and corresponding increases of unemployment are not adequately articulated from an individual-action level of analysis, we must find another method for explaining how unemployment occurs. In the following case, I will show that unemployment is adequately explained in terms of the organization of relations via the commodity-form.

One poignant example to clearly illustrate how the commodity-form structures employment comes from Ulrike Koch's film *Der Salzmänner von Tibet*.[121] In this account, Koch documents the annual migration of male Tibetan nomads to Lake Tsentso in order to gather and transport salt back

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121 Zeitgeist Films, 2002.

to their community in order to trade for barley and other necessary goods. In a remote area of Northern Tibet, we learn that the traditional migration of men and their yaks are quickly being replaced by hired laborers driving large trucks, thus making it possible to gather greater amounts of salt with less labor time. What typically was an annual event, gathering thousands of yaks and dozens of men from many villages throughout Northern Tibet, has turned into a lonely affair for these four men. "Margen" (the older man in the position of "mother" of the migration, assigned to feeding and making yak-butter tea for all the men) informs us that the price of salt is dropping, thus forcing them to gather greater amounts of higher-quality salt in order to keep their community from starving. Using their own yaks, plus the yaks of members of their community, these four men must work longer and harder to meet basic needs. As Margen speculates, the stability and sustainability of their community and way of life is deeply threatened by their ability to gather and sell salt at a particular price.

In this case the historical social characteristics of labor within these communities and its affect on the exchangeability of goods within the marketplace are relatively stable and transparent. However, with the introduction of hired laborers and trucks, the greater quantities of salt gathered and available within the marketplace drives the overall price of

salt down. Also, the division of labor of the hired hands shortens the necessary labor time in gathering and hauling salt. As a result, the longevity and sustainability of these migrations and way of life then will depend upon the ability of these men and yaks to compete with trucks and hired hands in gathering and selling salt.

Here we then see a structure emerging from value relations within this particular context. While it is not the direct intent of the hired hands driving trucks to put these nomads in a life-threatening situation of unemployment and near inevitable starvation, the unintended consequence of competing within the marketplace with more efficient and large-scale instruments of production has done just that. As the relations of production change within such developing capitalist nations, under- and unemployment are inevitable results for those who are unable to "remain competitive." For one's activity to be competitive, one must follow the imperatives based upon the structure of commodity relations. Small farmers, even those who are able to modernize equipment, afford cultivatable land, and increase their productive efficiency, still are unable to sustain levels of growth in addition to covering costs as those large agribusiness farms can. Consequently, in all parts of the globe "remaining competitive" is simply unachievable for small-to-medium scale grain, dairy,

and vegetable farmers given the international changes to the relations and forces of agricultural production. Also, as the means of production are more greatly centralized within the hands of a small number of large-scale industrialists and as the modernization of industry is increasingly replacing small-scale local production, in most cases communities who relied on local manufacturing are eventually forced to close factories and kowtow to large-scale industries as their only viable source of employment. Furthermore, given the shift of production from human to more computerized labor power, there are a declining number of jobs available in most non-specialized sectors. As there already is a large surplus labor population (some estimates put that globally at over one and one half billion people), a scarcity of jobs is part of the conditions of labor within our global capitalist economy.

For Marx, the situation facing these saltmen, in addition to other subsistence laborers, is understandable as a structural trend and pressure of a market system defined in value terms. The organization of understanding and choice by value considerations makes possible a structuring of relations and outcomes. This process then takes on a life of its own and organizes future economic activities and choices. Looking more broadly at such changes in the relations of production which affect

employment, we can see these structural forces confronting social activity via the value-form. A rapidly increasing population of people around the globe, at least half of whom labor to meet *basic* subsistence needs, the drive for corporations to cut production costs and hire cheaper labor, the conditions of labor promoting overwork and underpayment of labor-time (or no payments at all for "overtime" work) and shifting the costs of healthcare to its workforce, the increasingly internationalized economic decision-making processes out of the control of local and national governments – these are just a few of the practices which organize present and future activity which, in turn, creates a situation where unemployment is literally inevitable for an enormous amount of skilled and unskilled laborers. These contingent conditions organize relations between people, governments, nations and corporations to make certain outcomes highly likely or inevitable, and as a byproduct create certain further conditions which were not foreseen nor intended. Between the activities and decisions of laborers and their employers, as well as those conditions which organize these relations themselves, we can clearly see that there are forces and mechanisms which organize social activity to make inevitable the unintended condition that, in economic and political terms, certain people simply don't matter and aren't of social value. Unless we analyze the

conditions of unemployment, we will fail to realize that unemployment is a structural, as well as a personal, phenomenon.

It is part of the structure of capitalist labor relations to have a surplus population which are outside of the labor market and who are available as demand for labor arises. Their unemployment is of no concern to industry as long as the costs of the unemployed are not transferred to them. While it is useful to have surplus populations available for hire in times of business need (e.g. union strikes, increased production demands, temporary and seasonal production needs), the needs and demands of the unemployed do not surface within daily business life for corporations. As national and international governments have no incentive to ensure that the needs of these people are met, these unemployed are, in some sense, superfluous.

Consequently, within a global capitalist labor market, certain individuals are without economic importance for meeting the demands placed upon producers within a market system. They are thereby disposable when they do not serve such imperatives of commodity relations. Whether they are part of the twenty-seven million disposable people who are currently and forcibly enslaved, or are those hundreds of millions working in unskilled and easily replaceable manufacturing jobs,

these individuals are stripped of any ability to meet their own subsistence needs, not to mention the needs of their communities. Of course at a personal level, no group is directly responsible for such a state of affairs of people being stripped of basic human rights nor did anyone intend to create a global situation in which hundreds of millions of people are, in an economic and political sense, disposable. But these conditions and historical forces which have created a non-class of people have arisen as a result of a complex set of relations of power between local people groups, national government and business interests, and international political-economic decision-making bodies. As Marx has shown us, the basic economic relations between producers can and does change as a result of the organization of persons and their activities by the commodity-form. As a result, these organized relations generate violence against these disposable persons in the physical form of starvation, malnutrition, and premature death. These relations are neither "natural" forces beyond political-economic developments nor hazards which are "part of life." The independent reality of these contingent forces which generate violence against persons in ways beyond their direct ability to act against such harm and injury is itself structural violence. As we will see in the final section, this method for analyzing violence at a structural level is a vast

improvement upon Galtung's account.

Before moving on to a discussion of structural violence, we must further clarify Marx's notion of structure and how it relates to social activity. That is, through the above account we can show how global labor relations generate unemployment not by the personal actions of individual people, but through the unconscious social activity and unintended outcomes of groups within a competitive capitalist labor market. As we analyze those forces which both keep people in positions of economic unsustainability and desperation and also keep others in positions of wealth and political influence over conditions of production and distribution, we are able to see how certain relations of power do in fact shape outcomes and consequences not intended by any particular group. Within these relations of power, we are able to target how agents working within certain organized relations act in certain ways to bring about consequences which are likely or inevitable to bring about negative outcomes.

However, this is not to say that social activity is without recourse to change structural arrangements. Against the idea that unemployment mechanistically follows from the commodity-form, we must also look at the ways that social activity affect particular structural arrangements. That

is, the conflicting interests between employers and those seeking employment also generates change within the very organization of these commodity relations themselves. As workers organize to demand conditions of humane and sustainable employment, the autonomy of the structure to simply pit workers against one another is frustrated and undermined. As trade unionization grows and the collective bargaining power of workers secures continual employment, the organization of labor relations which generates unemployment will also change. Even though we find that the competitive capitalist labor market generates disposable persons and unsustainable wage compensation levels (given the need for employers to hire labor as cheaply as possible), we must not ignore the reality and ability of those groups to organize, confront, and change the very structural arrangements which condition their economic and social activities. As I will explain the following section, there is a dialectical understanding of the relationship between social structures and human activity which we find within Marx's method of analyzing political-economic relations. Instead of casting structures as totally determinant forces beyond the ability of agents to affect and resist, I will show how structures shape and also are affected by social action.

The dialectical relationship between social structures and human activity

The explanation of why unemployment may continually rise within a given society that we can draw from Marx is that the nature and effects of structures are inseparable from the quality of agency. The level of conscious collective activity combined with explicit motivations and material organization of these collectivities generates relative changes in the quality of the structure(s). If the quality of agency is relatively undeveloped (e.g. workers lack clear motivation, self-interest, and an organized front to negotiate and fight against the interests and organization of capitalist exploitation), those conditions which constrain and dictate workers' activities are strengthened and are ever more sustainable. When workers lack a conscious understanding of those forces which place them in a disadvantaged position (i.e. perpetual exploitation, lack of power to negotiate fair wages, etc.), those forces persist and continue to benefit the interests of capital. If this relatively undeveloped quality of agency persists, these forces codify and stabilize relations between different social groups.

Within Marx's discussion of primitive accumulation, he describes how the organization of relations between two types of commodity owners –

capitalists and free-laborers – is the result of past and present conflict and struggle. As the valorization of capital is dependent upon the extraction of surplus value from labor-power, capitalists seek to buy labor-power in order to increase their variable and constant capital. On the other hand, the other type of commodity owner – the free laborer – only has her/his labor-power to sell. Within this antagonistic relationship of competing interests between commodity owners, the free-laborer is thrown into the marketplace with particular forces and circumstances making exploitation inevitable. Those particular forces which developed to create the free-laborer are the stripping of means of production from the working class, the peasant class no longer being bound to the soil, a slave of another, and the freedom from "the regime of the guilds, the rules for apprentices and journeymen, and their restrictive labor regulations."[122] Once the laborer is then "free" to sell their labor in an open market, capitalists are then "free" to buy and exploit such labor-power.

> The free workers are therefore free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own. With the polarization of the commodity-market into these two classes, the fundamental conditions of capitalist production are present.[123]

Once free workers are stripped of the means of production, the sole way in which workers are able to enrich themselves is through the sale of their

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122 *Capital*, p. 875.
123 *Capital*, p. 874.

labor-power. As this coercive history of labor relations is a condition of present day exploitation, further conditions are then dependent upon the previous organization and subsequent codification of these antagonistic relations. So, for example, the only way in which capitalists are able to sustain increasing levels of surplus value extraction is to continually reduce both the cost and duration of necessary labor-time while increasing surplus labor-time. If the overall labor-time is increased (or is kept at a steady rate) while the necessary labor-time is reduced, then the conditions are set for the further valorization of capital. However, if workers were collectively conscious of the reasons for their exploitation and their own need to continually sell their labor (while capitalists live off the accumulated labor of workers), and if they were collectively organized around their common motivations, interests, and awareness, then these conditions of exploitation and their lack of ownership of the means of production could be confronted and changed. The crystallization of these conditions of capitalist labor relations then depends upon the levels of conscious collective activity between these two warring classes.

As the outcomes of these antagonistic relations organize present and future social activity *and* as a qualitative change within the level of conscious, self-interested and organized activity changes those codified

152

relations we can see that Marx's method develops a clear interrelationship between social structures and human activity. We find that there is not a mechanistic relationship between social structures and the activities which result from them (as in Galtung's account), but rather there is a dialectical interrelationship whereby structures shape and affect social activities as well as human activity changing and/or perpetuating particular social structures. Relating social structures and human actions together dialectically, as Marx does, shows more clearly how social activity is not simply an epiphenomenon of particular structural arrangements but rather shows how social activity is conditioned, constrained, and/or shaped by forces beyond the choices, control and consciousness of discrete subjects.

An analogous sense in which structures and actions are dialectically interrelated can be seen from language use. As Bhaskar situates this dialectical relationship, he states that "all human activity takes place within the context provided by a set of pre-existing social structures. These social structures are bequeathed "ready-made" to the current generation of agents, impinging involuntarily upon the latter and confronting them as an objective reality...irreducible to their current subjective beliefs and action."[124] In order to navigate and organize experience, every individual

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124 Lewis, Paul. "Realism, Causality and the Problem of Social Structure," in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, Vol. 30, Issue 3, 2000, p. 250.

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must be capable of language acquisition and understanding. This is something that individuals learn which is external to their own subjective beliefs and actions. At any given time, within the set of social agents said to constitute the social world, we do not find all and only those agents who are responsible for the construction and organization of these social structures. These structures pre-date the existence of all these agents and confront these agents as a force outside and beyond themselves. While there is a historical and genealogical question of the origins of language, such an excavation does not interest us here. Suffice it to say for our purposes that on the one hand, individuals are confronted by social phenomena which are not of their own choosings or their own constructions and which are irreducible to their current interests and choices. To briefly illustrate, when one travels and confronts "the way things are done in this part of the world" (e.g. how train compartments are socially organized in terms of causal stranger-to-stranger conversations and interactions), it is not simply the way that those native individuals intentionally and consciously choose to act that confronts and forces the traveler to respond and adapt in certain ways. The way that these public transportation structures are organized then goes beyond those agents present and are said to exist as phenomena which are irreducible to the sum of these

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On the other hand, structures are continually maintained, reproduced, and changed through social action. Since, structures do not exist, nor are perceivable, independent from their effects, it is through social action that these effects are perceived and understood. The choices then that agents make affects how these structures will persist or change. Language games and rules change over time, changing into new forms as language users intentionally or unintentionally alter their styles of communication. In the transportation example, over time the nature of interaction may change and alter into some form entirely different. The London Underground may become a place for lively interaction. Music may no longer pour out of Kenyan city buses. All of these ways of relating may drastically change over time, but not simply as a result of one particular instance or act. In short, as Roy Bhaskar claims:

> Society is both the ever-present condition (material cause) and the continually reproduced outcome of human agency. And praxis is both work, that is conscious production, and (normally unconscious) reproduction of the condition of the production, that is society. One could refer to the former as the duality of structure, and the latter as the duality of praxis.[125]

With the example of language use and acquisition, we can see another way to understand the dialectical relationship between social

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125 Bhaskar, Roy. *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*, Sussex: Harvester, 1979, pp. 43-44.

action and social structures. As we saw with Marx's understanding of this relationship, action is both a product of and a force for change with social structures. As structures, which are themselves constituted by the actions of previous groups of people, condition present and future action, so too does present action alter and change future structures. Consider again our discussion of unemployment. As the harsh conditions of unemployment either lessen or greaten, changes to human activity will inevitably arise, whether in the form of a global health or food crisis, or a steady development of infrastructures designed to sustain and nurture human communities. As the actions of individuals reinforce or undermine structural arrangements, so too do the conditions under which people live and operate affect both their conscious and unconscious choices.

For our purposes here, an alternative account of structural violence must clearly identify structures that generate harms and injuries to persons. By situating violence as a human artifact and the organization of relations as contingent upon conflictual relations and competing interests, an alternative notion of structural violence situates violence as a phenomenon not limited to the personal acts and the personal responsibility of particular agents. Also, against Galtung's topdog/underdog dichotomy and the resulting powerlessness that underdogs have to

confront and change structures, this dialectical understanding of structures and activity we find in Marx captures the ability that agents have to identify, confront, and change violence at a structural level.

In order to concretely detail this relationship between structures and violence as well as our ability to identify and change structures which cause violence, in the final section we will look at one specific case, that of "industrial accidents," to demonstrate how this understanding of structures and actions are useful for understanding violence at a structural level. From the following case on slaughterhouse industries and relations, we will be able to see how competing interests between different groups can, as an unintended consequence, bring about increasing levels of violence; how mundane routinized activities themselves propagate violence as an unforeseen outcome; how organized relations between people within a particular industry can propagate violence without any subjects acting with force against others or with the intention to commit harms; and, how specific concrete practices can be addressed to reduce instances of structural violence.

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The mandates and practices of slaughterhouse work

Each year, at least one in four slaughterhouse workers suffer job-related injury or illness. As the most dangerous job in the U.S., cattle slaughterhouses are particularly situated so as to make injury more likely than a chicken or pig slaughterhouse, given the variability of cattle which results in a lack of automation of most aspects of the production process. As one of the nation's lowest paid jobs with one of the highest turnover rates, workers must quickly learn to work within the fast-paced environment if they are to avoid slipping on open pools of blood or avoid being hit by swinging carcasses moving above many knife-wielding workers scrambling to do their part on the line. Let us now analyze a host of structures within U.S. cattle slaughterhouses that organize relations to make violence inevitable. As an archetypal case of industrial violence against workers, we will clearly see how structural violence is an ever-present phenomenon within the production process. Nevertheless, these instances of avoidable and socially-caused injury and harm are typically cast as "accidents" or as inevitable byproducts of an unautomatable industry such as the cattle slaughterhouses.

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three notable aspects to the safety and health of slaughterhouse workers

that are worth noting: i) the meatpacking industry has the highest injury

rate – official statistics estimate 40,000 per year – but it is quite likely

higher than that; ii) serious injury rate is five times the national average;

iii) the rate of cumulative trauma injuries (carpel tunnel, disc problems,

trigger finger, tendinitis, etc.) is thirty-three times higher than the

national average. Looked at more closer, the nature and causes of these

injuries, and the conditions under which the persons are injured and

treated, reveals a high degree of systematic organization not to increase

the protection of workers, but to protect the profitability of the company.

While eighty-five percent of the beef market is controlled by four major

competitors – Iowa Beef Packers (IBP), ConAgra, Excel (a subsidiary of

Cargill), and National Beef – standards for worker compensation for injury

and production line safety are relatively consistent. As the profits depend

upon the speed of the chain upon which cattle carcasses hang, in order to

remain competitive companies must keep the line moving as much as

possible. As the interest of the company is bound up with the maximum

speed of production and the interest of the worker is bound up with

minimum workplace injuries, there is a clear incentive for both parties to

juggle interests between maximum productive capacities and minimum

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workplace injuries. Take a typical case of worker injury on the production line: laceration. As Eric Schlosser details,

> The typical line speed in American slaughterhouses 25 years ago was about 175 cattle per hour. Some line speeds now approach 400 cattle per hour. Technological advances are responsible for part of the increase: the powerlessness of the workers explains the rest. Faster also means more dangerous... All sorts of *accidents* – involving power tools, saws, knives, conveyor belts, slippery floors, falling carcasses – become more likely when the chain moves too fast. One slaughterhouse nurse told me she could always tell the line speed by the number of people visiting her office.[126]

Given the tension between profitability and safety, it is evident from the BLS and the century-long reputation of the meatpacking industry that the drive for profitability far exceeds any guise of slaughterhouse safety. In fact, not only are IBP, Excel, and ConAgra all self-insured – which creates a fiscal tension between profitability and payments for injured workers – the Texas Worker's Compensation Reform Act of 1989 allows private companies to opt out of the state worker's compensation system. Also, IBP coerces workers into waiving their right to sue the company under "Workplace Injury Settlement Programs" in exchange for immediate treatment. Given the condition of the program that outside medical treatment can be grounds for loosing all benefits from the company (and that the average wages for workers are $9.50 per hour), workers routinely accept "free" medical treatment from the companies nurses and doctors. In

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126 "The Chain Never Stops," Mother Jones, July/August 2001, p. 4. Italics mine.

the case of the Excel injury waiver program, it is included within union contracts. As a result, hired workers immediately give up their right to fight against unsafe work practices while they are employed by these companies. Given such systematic ways of organizing injury treatment and settlement, it is of little surprise that there is a great imbalance between the relative importance of productivity and safety at a corporate level.

Add to these conditions the lack of power of workers to organize and the conflict between workers themselves within the production process. Increasingly unskilled migrant workers from Mexico are hired at substandard wages at these now rural and highly centralized slaughterhouses (far from the union strongholds of the cities), thus placing barriers to collectively organizing a union, whether in terms of language barriers and high turnover rates or, in cases of illegal immigrants, fear of the INS. As in many of the specific cases detailed by Schlosser, the increasing levels of migrant workers provide a steady source of cheap labor for these slaughterhouses, thus reducing the company's incentive to care for individual workers. Furthermore, as a clause of injury settlement programs details, workers who quit their job automatically lose any medical benefits from the company. As such, it is in the interest of the worker to continue laboring with the company, despite any injuries or

illnesses.

We must also recognize the relations of power not just between workers and owners, but also the internal dynamics between workers on the production floor. As Schlosser attests, "Slaughterhouse supervisors and foremen, whose annual bonuses are usually tied to injury rate of their workers, often discourage people from reporting their injuries or seeking first aid. The packinghouse culture encourages keeping quiet and laboring in pain."[127] Not only then are workers' interests organized against one another in such cases, but within such dangerous and close quarters, workers on the line internalize production norms and thus indirectly reproduce the very conditions under which they injured and maimed. In order to save face and remain a vital worker, one does not want to be responsible for stopping the line or for generating errors and missed carcasses within the production process. As a result, routine maintenance and care of workplace conditions are subordinated to the impetus towards efficiency and consistency.

From this analysis of the meatpacking industry, the ideological distortion of calling such systematic injuries "accidents" becomes evident. While it may not be the intent of any agent within this industry to

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127 Schlosser, p. 7.

propagate violence against others, the routine productive activity and the interests of all parties involved makes inevitable that violence will occur. Within the mundane activities of butchering and line maintenance (e.g. sweeping blood down drains, working in cold, foggy conditions), the slippery and visually impaired conditions under which workers labor with knives and other sharp instruments makes unintended injury and death inevitable. While there are nefarious purposes within this industry in order to cut costs and remain competitive, we cannot simply reduce workplace violence down to the policies and intentions of evil corporate owners and managers. While there are coercive elements within the reality of violence that companies can use against workers (e.g. threat of starvation through firing workers), there are also non-coercive and unintended consequences which result in violence. Consider the following case detailed by Schlosser:

> On the morning of September 30, 1996, after splitting his first carcass, Glover noticed vibrations in the steel platform beneath him. A maintenance man checked the platform and found a bolt missing, but told Glover it was safe to keep working until it was replaced. Moments later, the platform collapsed as Glover was splitting a carcass. He dropped about seven feet and shattered his right knee. While he lay on the ground and workers tried to find help, the chain kept going as two other splitters picked up the slack.[128]

In such a case, the mandates of efficiency within the slaughterhouse replace the elements of malicious intent and forceful action we found within definitions of violence in chapter one. While Coady and Audi may

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128 Schlosser, p. 10.

163

argue that these injuries and harms do not qualify as violence, the injury of

Glover and the consequences resulting from it (which cost him his job and

medical insurance) are no less harmful and brutal than if a worker

intentionally smashes his knee with a sledgehammer. Regardless of the

fact that there was no subject who acted to cause violence, such cases of

violence are a reality given the structural arrangement of the meatpacking

industry itself, as well as the relations between this industry and state and

federal legal and political institutions. Consequently, the conflicts within

the relations of power between both subordinates themselves as well as

between subordinates and those in dominant positions of power create

conditions under which workplace violence is inevitable. Given the formal

and informal mandates of productivity, efficiency, and safety, the activity

and interests of workers, supervisors, and owners are organized to ensure

that profitability remains the primary goal of the production process. As

wages and investments depend upon increasing profits, the need for

restructuring the norms of safety, which would in fact reduce workplace

violence, are undermined and ignored. We cannot then ignore the relations

of power when judging violence, but must look beyond immediate SAO

relations and specified contexts of direct harm and malicious intent to the

structures organizing social activity. Regardless of the complexity of the

mediations between subjects, violence at a structural level is manifest with the same results of broken limbs and lacerated bodies.

Conclusion

In my alternative account of structural violence, we navigate between the narrowness of direct action approach we saw in chapter one and the overextension of wide approach we see in Galtung's account of structural violence. By relating Marx's dialectical understanding of the relationship between social structures and human activity to cases of violence, we are now in a position to understand how an account of structural violence can grasp violence itself, oriented in terms of bodily harm and physical injury, within relations of power where subjects are not directly causing violence against others. However, still outstanding within this discussion is the question of violence as a reality independent from particular relations of power. That is, while the above discussion of Marx's notion of structure and the corresponding examples of unemployment and workplace violence illustrate ways in which social activity is organized to make certain unintended outcomes likely or inevitable, the problem of showing that violence is not simply reduced to particular relations power

has not yet been addressed and answered. If we are to maintain a notion of structural violence that in fact is not reducible to organized relations of power, then we must demonstrate how violence interrelates with and influences power relations. In the final chapter that follows, using two specific types of organized power relations (i.e. domination and exploitation), I will show that power and violence are intimately related, but nevertheless distinctive.

Chapter Four: Distinctions and Interconnections Between Structural Violence, Exploitation, and Domination

We have analyzed both traditional and extended approaches to violence and now need a further analysis of the relationship between violence and power. As I've shown, we must overcome the limitations to traditional approaches where *subjects who act* is a necessary condition for there to be violence, that violence is always *done by one to another*, and that this is done in a particular manner and from particular intentions or motivations. Though each of these four conditions does play into some conceptions of direct violence, most clearly in forms of personal physical violence, none of these conditions alone are either necessary or sufficient for some act or situation to be understood as violence. Galtung and I have convincingly shown that violence is perpetuated beyond the immediate activity of individual subjects and outside of localized contexts where the cause(s) and effect(s) of violence are, in principle, observable. We must also substantially revise our thinking of the relationship between violence and power when developing and arguing for a concept of structural violence and avoid reducing violence to power as we have seen happens under Galtung's approach in the previous two chapters.

In this chapter I will further develop and explain my alternative

conception of structural violence by clearly distinguishing it from two

specific relations of power, namely domination and exploitation. By

specifically relating violence to power within particular political-economic

contexts, I will show why the notion of structural violence needs to be

sharply distinguished from domination and exploitation. In the two

following discussions relating violence to domination and exploitation, we

must do three things. The first task is to discuss what exploitation and

domination are within a political-economic context and why they differ

from structural violence. Second, I will show how this distinction between

violence and domination or exploitation avoids Galtung's conflation of

violence with these two kinds of power. Finally, despite the distinctions

that need to be made between these three concepts, historically we need to

acknowledge that violence frequently function within roles of domination

and exploitation. However, given the variability of agency and the ways in

which agents re-shape and change particular structural arrangements, the

relative increases or decreases of violence do not necessarily follow the

same course as changes in exploitation or domination. With the relatively

independent outcomes of violence apart from the organization of power

relations, we find that changes in structural violence do not necessarily

lead to changes, of the same degree or type, within domination or exploitation. Consequently, the presence and independent reality of structural violence must be recognized and addressed as distinct from domination and exploitation.

Regarding this third aspect of the relationship between violence, domination, and exploitation, I will also argue for two claims that will clarify how my approach differs from the restrictivist and extended approaches. On the one hand, organized relations of power make possible, though do not determine, the massive harms and injuries that unintended nonregulation and intentional regulation can and do bring about. Rather than focus on structural violence as indirect, unintended violence, my account will show how routine, organized relations of power makes violence possible or inevitable against subordinate and oppressed groups. We will then be able to see how the intentions of actors do in fact shape the structural forces in positive and negative ways, even if avoidable, socially-caused harms do not result from direct human activity. On the other hand, violence is a precondition for, and outcome of, particular power relations, in that violence is a means to secure and propagate the control and influence of a particular group in a dominant position of economic and/or political power. Violence is a means to secure states of domination, but is not the

exclusive or necessary means to secure such power over others.

Furthermore, such crystallizations of power over others itself may be

extreme (i.e. those in a subordinate position may be without any plausible

material recourse to changing these conditions), but this is not to say that

domination is itself structural violence. By illuminating the relationship

between violence and power in these ways, we will better understand the

distinctiveness of structural violence from domination and exploitation.

In what follows, I will first briefly present Marx's idea of exploitation

and show how relations of exploitation are distinct from the role that

structural violence plays in maintaining economic inequality. As we saw in

chapter two, Galtung maintains that exploitation and inequality itself is

structural violence. In what follows it will be clear that though inequality

is an outcome of exploitative relations, inequality that results from

exploitation is not itself structural violence. Also, though there are

important correlations between the use of overt and covert forms of

violence within relations of exploitation, violence itself is distinct from

exploitation. Understanding capitalist exploitation as the coercive

appropriation of the products of labor from workers by capitalists, I will

briefly analyze these political-economic relations and then show two

important interconnections between violence and exploitation – how

violence is both an outcome of and instrument for international capitalist exploitation today. Through a brief example of contemporary exploitation within export-processing zone garment industries, I will illustrate the kind of interrelationship that does hold between structural violence and exploitation.

Following this analysis of exploitation and violence, I will draw on the work of Michel Foucault and Herbert Marcuse to present an idea of domination that will help us see how it should be kept distinct from structural violence. Disciplinary power and institutionalized repression are themselves structural violence according to Galtung. In agreement with Galtung, these are phenomena that deeply rely upon systematic coercion, force and, in some instances, violence, in order to maintain and control social behaviors and systems that benefit dominant groups. Nevertheless, structural violence, as Galtung holds, is not simply an inconspicuous tool used to further a group's dominant position or a system only designed to benefit those in positions of decision-making power. Illustrated in terms of the privatization of public goods, structural violence operates independently of the choices, purposes and interests of those in dominant positions of decision-making power (e.g. topdogs according to Galtung) while it also functions to secure states of domination.

171

As a result of the work I've presented on structures in chapter three

and the analysis of domination and exploitation in relation to structural

violence below, we can then conclude that Galtung's notion of violence, cast

in terms of "needs-deprivation" and a "potential/actual gap," and his

subsequent notion of structural violence, creates more problems than it

solves for political theorists dissatisfied with traditional approaches to

violence and power. Within my proposed notion of structural violence,

focusing on bodily harm and injury while recognizing the reality of violence

at a structural level, we are able to understand and theorize organized

relations of power that are inextricably bound up with enduring relations

of violence. Instead of recapitulating Galtung's mistake in subsuming a

broad range of social evils under one umbrella concept, thus diluting the

force and evil of violence itself, understanding violence at a structural level

as a distinctive phenomenon then equips political theorists with specific

ways of targeting, criticizing, and proposing solutions for change within

relations of violence themselves.

Distinguishing capitalist exploitation from structural violence

As previously stated, exploitation is the coercive appropriation of the

products of labor from workers by capitalists.[129] One key moment and reality that directly illustrates this relationship is the quantitative establishment of wages and associative benefits for workers producing these goods (i.e. overall compensation for labor-power). According to Marx, the cost of production of simple labor power amounts to the cost of producing and reproducing the worker. If the seller is overcompensated, then the labor power they expend will drop below the consistent amount needed by the buyer. If the seller is undercompensated, the labor power they expend will be exhausted prematurely and thus the buyer will need to purchase additional labor power from another seller. Consequently, capitalists need accumulated labor and labor power for its own reproduction just as laborers need capitalists in order to sell their labor to meet their own subsistence needs. In general terms of the structural imperatives of this exchange process, the interests of each are the same. The capitalists need laborers in order to generate more exchange value and acquire greater amounts of accumulated labor; conversely the laborers need capitalists in order to acquire goods for immediate consumption and their own reproduction. However, within specific terms of the wage-labor contract of capitalist exchanges, the exploitation of labor power is built into

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129 While there is exploitation in feudal societies, as well as others, for our purposes I will specifically be discussing exploitation in capitalist societies.

the wage-labor contract. The rate of surplus value, the "exact expression

for the degree of exploitation of the worker by the capitalist" according to

Marx,[130] is surplus labor divided by necessary labor. The ratio between

surplus value and variable capital (i.e. living labor) then expresses the

amount of value generated by the worker above and beyond the

compensation they receive. Since the exchange value generated by the

worker is greater than the compensation s/he receives, the worker expends

more labor power and creates more value for the capitalist than is

necessary for her/him to reproduce and meet her/his needs. As Marx

states,

> The worker receives means of subsistence in exchange for his [sic] labour power, but the capitalist receives in exchange for his means of subsistence labour, the productive activity of the worker, the creative power whereby the worker not only replaces what he consumes but *gives to the accumulated labour a greater value than it previously possessed.*[131]

From this brief analysis of exploitation, we can see that structural

violence is not a necessary outcome nor instrument for the exploitation of

workers. Owners of the means of production can consensually appropriate

exchangeable goods produced by laborers. Particularly in cases of small

labor populations and great demands for those laborers by capitalists,

those laborers themselves may feel that they are adequately and fairly

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130 *Capital*, p. 326.
131 *Marx-Engels Reader*, "Wage Labor and Capital," p. 178.

compensated for their part in the production process despite the alienation of the products of their labor from themselves. In certain cases these workers consent to their own exploitation and find that they are not harmed nor injured by the conditions of their labor. Consequently, both subjective and objective aspects of exploitation do not necessarily lead to outcomes of violence even though they may lead to relative inequality in the benefits afforded to these workers and to those capitalists who purchase their labor power. The reality of structural violence is contingent upon the complex relations of consent and coercion within the bargaining process between workers and capitalists. If these relations coercively organize activity to result in constant harm and injury (e.g. the exploitation of migrant slaughterhouse workers), we can see evidence of structural violence within exploitation. However, this specific phenomenon is quite distinct from other outcomes resulting from exploitation, in particular, inequality.

The outcomes of inequality as distinct from structural violence can be seen within the struggle over compensation for appropriating the products of labor. It is the establishment of a minimum level for compensating labor power expended. While Marx focused primarily on the extraction of surplus value from the worker in order to argue that worker

exploitation is part of the logic of capitalism, another important part of

exploitation is the reality of minimum compensation levels. Through

political struggles surrounding and embedded within this economic

exchange, the compensation level is set below what workers require for

their own reproduction. That is, instead of basing an understanding of

exploitation simply upon the labor theory of value, there is a further aspect

to the wage contract in that workers are avoidably undercompensated for

their labor power expended. As already has been said, the minimum level

of compensation from the seller of labor power's standpoint is the amount

needed by her/him to meet her/his basic needs. However, the minimum

levels are not set as such according to individual needs, but rather to

average or collective needs bargained between the owner(s) and producer(s)

of commodities.

> Wages so determined [i.e. cost of maintaining the worker] are called the *wage
> minimum*. This wage minimum, like the determination of the price of commodities,
> by the cost of production in general, does not hold good for the *single individual* but
> for the species. Individual workers, millions of workers, do not get enough to be able
> to exist and reproduce themselves; *but the wages of the whole working class* level
> down, within their fluctuations, to this minimum.[132]

According to Marx then the minimum floor for the purchase of labor power

is determined according to the ability of the buyer to reproduce labor power

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132 *Readings in Marxist Sociology*, edited by Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode, Oxford: Oxford
    University Press, 1983, p. 176.

in general, and not according to the cost of worker A or B's labor power and the reproduction of her/his individual labor power. Furthermore, what this minimum is set at through the bargaining process, and who does in fact benefit at the bargaining table, depends upon the relationship between the amount of labor power for sale and the amount of labor power needed for purchase.

Though the interests of the buyer and seller may coincide during the exchange process (i.e. one needs to sell labor power and the other needs to purchase labor power for its own reproduction), the interests of each are diametrically opposed when it comes to setting this minimum level. Consequently there is an inherent and enduring conflictual relationship between workers and capitalists. The relative populations of available workers affect the organization of these relations and practices. If there is a large surplus population of workers for a particular industry, this minimum level of compensation falls. Especially in the context of contemporary TNCs, corporations have greater bargaining power in that they have the ability to move across borders seeking working populations that suit their desired minimum costs for workers and their desired rate of exploitation. With a steady and increasing influx of politically and economically-disadvantaged migrant populations gravitating towards

177

industrial and commercial urban areas, the surplus labor populations of these areas continue to rise. However, if the tables turn and there is a small surplus labor population, the minimum floor rises and, in some cases, rises considerably above subsistence levels. In such cases, workers are afforded the opportunity of moving across borders and are compensated considerably for such mobility despite the appropriation of the products of their labor (e.g. the INS and computer corporations soliciting Indian and Chinese computer specialists in the late 1990's). In the latter cases, the individual worker can choose to sell her/his labor power or not. In principle, if the buyer is not willing to pay what the worker demands, the worker can choose another buyer that is willing to exchange labor power for a particular amount of compensation.

Nevertheless, considering the global situation today, labor surpluses dominant most sectors of the labor market, especially in the service and unskilled labor markets. As a result, the advantage of corporations at the bargaining table further increases the surplus value capitalists generate through worker exploitation and further undermines the ability of workers to fight for an increase of compensation for the actual appropriation of the products of their labor. Furthermore, considering the decreased sanctioning power workers have over corporations – the decreasing

178

likeliness that anti-union activities of TNCs will be legally prosecuted and

that TNCs will be forced to face tougher bargaining demands from

workers[133] – workers face even greater challenges in gaining compensation

that is fair and equitable in proportion to the labor power expended. As the

OECD *Employment Outlook* states, at the turn of the century those areas

with high trade union density were able to achieve lesser wage and income

inequalities than those without collective bargaining agreements while the

growth of inequalities is partly due to the "...weakening of the trade unions

and decentralization of the collective bargaining process."[134]

We cannot deny though that typically unequal benefits are a direct

outcome of the exploitation of workers within capitalist societies across the

globe. The establishment of compensation levels for the appropriation of

the products of labor results from a struggle over capitalists profiting off of

the surplus value generated by workers and workers seeking to raise

compensation levels well above the minimum level. One need only look at

the results from this basic struggle within the U.S. to see that inequality

continues to rise as a result of workers loosing this struggle.[135] But this

133 Navarro, Vicente. "Neoliberalism, 'Globalization,' Unemployment, Inequalities, and the Welfare State," in *The Political Economy of Social Inequalities: Consequences for Health and Quality of Life*, Baywood Publishing Co.: Amityville, NY, 2002, pp. 33-107.
134 Navarro, Ibid., p. 71.
135 For a recent treatment of this highly trod ground, see Michael Yates' article "Poverty and Inequality in the Global Economy," *Monthly Review*, Vol. 55, Issue 9, 2004.

struggle itself, the generation of unequal benefits through exploitation, is also not structural violence as such. These struggles do create patterns of inequality that further disadvantage workers, but the ways in which the lives of workers and capitalists are mutually structured as a result of exploitation do not necessarily result from violence or result in outcomes of violence. Instruments of violence are not always necessary for capitalists seeking to appropriate products they did not labor to produce, or for workers when seeking to advance their demands and interests. The acquisition of the means of production and the demands for more fair and equitable compensation levels can and sometimes do come about peacefully and nonviolently, even if the demands and interests of one group are not met.

From this analysis of exploitation, inequality and structural violence, we are able to see how these concepts depict distinct aspects of relations within capitalist labor market relations. For Galtung, exploitation is inseparable from structural violence. From this overly broad notion of structural violence, socially-avoidable inequalities themselves are violence. We may recall from chapter two that he understands exploitation as inequality and argues that, "the pattern is set for an aggravation of inequality, in some structures so much so that the lowest-ranking actors

are deprived not only relative to the potential, but indeed below

subsistence minimum..."[136] Even granting the identification of exploitation

with inequality, we need not treat exploitation directly as structural

violence. But even if this understanding of exploitation results in unmet

needs of workers, this is not to say that this undervaluation and

appropriation of the products of labor is itself objectionable on the grounds

that it is structural violence. Violence against workers is not an "unequal

exchange of needs currency," as Galtung claims, where "topdogs" have

greater needs satisfaction than "underdogs". Given his understanding of

violence as "needs deprivation" that I explained in chapter two – a gap

between the potential and the actual – exploitation itself is a form of

violence.

  Within relations of exploitation as understood within my account

above, avoidable, socially caused harms and injuries are neither necessary

outcomes nor instruments for exploitation. The appropriation of the

products of labor and the resulting inequality from these relations of

exploitation are distinct from the bodily harms and injuries that result

from such organized relations of power. Unequal outcomes of exploitation,

such as the greater benefits afforded to capitalists than to workers as a

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136 Galtung, *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research*, p. 177.

181

result of the appropriation of the products of labor, are not structural violence. Any bodily harm and injury resulting from product appropriation within these market relations can be distinctively noted and evaluated as outcomes of exploitation and as instruments to further relations of exploitation. Violence may be an instrument to maintain inequality and inequality may set the conditions for the proliferation of death, disease, malnutrition and such, but these two outcomes of exploitation are independently identified in how they specifically affect workers, why they result from exploitation, and how they can be overcome and changed. Recognizing the reality of structural violence within exploitation apart from other kinds of outcomes allows us, analytically and normatively, to evaluate such organized relations in terms of the specific injustices present within these economic relations. On the basis then of harm and injury to workers resulting from the ways in which their labor is organized, and not simply resulting from the malicious intent or forceful activity of particular capitalists, we can identify and address specific ways to reduce violence through an analysis of the structural arrangement of work and the conditions which underlie productive activities.

Interconnections between capitalist exploitation and structural violence within contemporary globalization

Despite the distinctions between exploitation and violence, when we analyze empirical cases of contemporary international exploitation we find that along with other forms of injustice (i.e. discrimination, oppression), violence is in fact manifested as an outcome of and/or instrument for exploitation in a large number of cases. As a result of the frequent ways that relations of exploitation organize activity in ways that makes violence possible, these two phenomena tend to be conflated since they arise simultaneously and can be seen as inseparable. When the exploitation of certain sectors of the labor market results in a drop below subsistence minimums, one sees massive and preventable harms occurring to workers and their dependents. It can be in terms of malnutrition, a lack of ability to meet one's health care, or an inability to procure adequate shelter. As a result, it is unclear how we can plausibly keep exploitation and structural violence separate.

Consider the dramatic structural and concrete changes which have occurred the last two decades to the conditions of women workers in garment industries throughout the global South (e.g. Sri Lanka, Jamaica, China, Indonesia, Lesotho). Economic and political relations are structured

so as to keep women in a perpetual state of economic vulnerability through the domination of TNCs as buyers of women's labor-power. In addition to the power these TNCs exercise over women's labor, we have ever-increasing problems resulting from the exploitation of these women: i) an increase in the scarcity of livable wage-earning jobs and ii) the dismantling of public infrastructures (e.g. access to water, medicine, adequate housing, the distribution of resources for women in times of greater need, etc.) necessary to support and lighten women's non-wage earning labor (i.e. subsistence labor, childcare, domestic labor, etc).

As a result of the exploitation of these women workers, increasing levels and degrees of systemic harms are forced upon women and their dependents (i.e. disease, malnutrition, exhaustion and death). For example, under the Caribbean Basin Initiative, the Caribbean Development Bank and the IMF loaned money to the Jamaican government to build structures for free export processing zones (EPZs) of fabric and clothing. Like independent countries, these EPZs are not liable to national taxes and certain duties and are not under local control or laws that usually govern a country's operations and production. In effect, the goods shipped in and out of EPZs never touch the soil of the nations on which EPZs are built. As Chinese women are hired by subcontractors for large clothing brand names

and "shipped" to Jamaica as full-time workers, they are deliberately

brought in to undercut the bargaining power of Jamaican women in EPZs.

Being outside the legal jurisdiction of Kingston, Jamaican women cannot

appeal to government regulations or laws to force contractors to recognize

their bargaining rights. Enticed by the promises of steady and high wages,

the often rural Chinese women from "pre-capitalist subsistence labor

communities" pay up to $2,000 to travel to Jamaica to work in garment

factories. Far from home where much of their wages go (for family savings,

food, and childcare), these women end up working twelve to sixteen hours a

day, six days a week, typically without overtime pay. As the Jamaican

government has to repay debts to the IMF and CDB for EPZs (at .52 per

dollar interest rate repayment in 1999) and Jamaican workers are

increasingly undercut by outside laborers shipped into their countries,

unemployment, undernourishment, and severe poverty rapidly rise.[137]

As a direct result of such structural changes to international

economic exploitation involving a competitive international workforce as

well as the dismantling of national social welfare infrastructures, violence

occurs not only to Jamaicans themselves, but also to those non-native

laborers who compete for jobs better than they are able to secure in their

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137 See *Life and Debt* (2001), a film based upon Jamaica Kinkaid's book *A Small Place,* New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1988.

home countries. As Dong-Sook S. Gills notes, women make up the vast majority of EPZs around the world (upwards of 70%).[138] They are "a direct source of cheap labor, especially in export manufacturing industries, whether as formal, informal, or casual labor. Among the workers of the world, women are all too often the most vulnerable and the most exploited during so-called adjustment or restructuring processes."[139] As the 1994 UN Conference on Trade and Development shows, the main employers of the roughly 850 EPZs in developing countries, transnational companies are the main employers and comprise 80% of the foreign direct investment. The workforce of these EPZs has been estimated at around 27 million people.

From this example, we can see other relations of power in addition to exploitation which organize these women's work, particularly discrimination and oppression. As capital investment and profit then rests directly upon the backs and work of these women laborers, the specific form of the exploitation, discrimination and oppression of these women organizes their lives in ways that make structural violence highly likely, if not inevitable. Consequently, structural violence may seem to then be nothing other than the organization of particular power relations and

138 "Globalization of Production and Women in Asia," in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: Globalization and Democracy*, edited by Ronaldo Munck and Barry K. Gills, London: Sage Publications, May 2002, p. 110ff.
139 Ibid.

thereby can be directly associated with the ways in which these women are powerless to change the conditions of their labor and social activities. In the above case we can see a clear case of exploitation joined directly with women's oppression and discrimination in addition to outcomes of violence. Given the sexual division of labor and the ability of TNCs to exclude local women in favor of "outsiders" (who are more easily and thoroughly exploitable), women are in a particularly vulnerable economic position, given their usual responsibility to be the sole providers for children and other dependents, combining their unpaid domestic labor with wage-earning labor responsibilities. Within this aspect of women's oppression and their relative powerlessness to re-organize gendered economic labor relations, the possibility of violence against them and their children is highly probable. Here we can see how violence results from other contingent political-economic affairs and other related phenomena like discrimination and oppression. Work-related ailments, chronic illness, and injuries under such labor conditions, then, are not simply byproducts of such labor (e.g. accidents, "necessary evils" of the labor process, etc.), but violence against women.

However, the oppression and segmentation of women in such jobs is not the same as structural violence. Forms of injustice besides structural

violence occur, including harassment, intimidation, coercive economic

insecurity and so on. Nor, as Galtung assumes, should we cast violence as

"impediments to freedom" as the only byproduct of these oppressive

structures and practices. The discrimination against Jamaican women in

favor of hiring Chinese women does perpetuate malnutrition, disease, and

other forms of violence against these women, but this discrimination is not

reducible to relations of violence nor are these relations of violence

derivable from economic and ethnic discrimination. As capitalists seek to

extract greater amounts of surplus value from garment workers, those

workers which cannot or will not produce at demanded levels of

compensation will lose employment and be barred from being re-employed.

Such discrimination based upon the need to increase profitability is seen as

justified by capitalists given the "demands of the market and

shareholders." Furthermore, the oppression of women within the garment

industry based upon the sexual division of labor further exacerbates the

poverty and violence these particular women are subject to. When workers

must decide between competing needs – building houses, buying food, and

meeting other subsistence needs of their own as well as the needs of

dependents – and there is no material aid for these workers to gain

adequate housing, food and other basic necessities, we can see how the

gendered nature of garment work forces them in to a life of perpetual

poverty and subsequent longer work hours to struggle to make ends meet.

Capitalists depend upon such oppressive conditions in order to perpetually

secure cheap labor costs and high production quotas. As we can see then,

discrimination and oppression are two of the many forms of injustice at

work in such a case.

The reality of structural violence then is not simply the

powerlessness and impediments to the freedoms of these women, nor is it

the discrimination of the Jamaican women given their demands for more

livable wages. It is the physical and psychological harms, violations and

injuries that result from the structures which make possible or block their

present and future actions for economic and social justice. While there is a

clear correlation between the exploitation of these women and the violence

they are subject to, analyzing and evaluating these practices under the

umbrella concept of structural violence as Galtung proposes it simply

obfuscates the complexity of injustice. Distinguishing those aspects of

injustice which are instances of structural violence from those which are

exploitative, oppressive and/or discriminating separates out how these

women are specifically affected by the organization of diverse power

relations (e.g. gendered, economic, ethnic) in order to confront what these

injustices are, why they are objectionable, and how they can be changed.

Finally, there is another aspect to this complicated relationship between exploitation and structural violence. In many cases, violence functions to maintain and secure relations of exploitation. With the threats of starvation and lack of freedoms that come with loosing an income (however meager that income may be), thousands of women travel many miles from home to work in such places to avoid the violence that results from unemployment. Such instruments of violence are then preconditions for the exercise of TNC power within labor relations. Similarly, state violence functions to keep protesting and agitated crowds of national women pacified (as in the case of the Kukdong factory and those factories in the Kingston EPZs), particularly when unpaid wages are the motivation for their strikes and work stoppages demanding economic justice. In such cases, the coercive aspect of threats of violence, of loosing or not securing employment, regulates and limits the choices and activities of these women seeking work or those women seeking to secure a labor contract. When violence in these instances organizes and predetermines the choices of groups within marginalized or segmented positions of power, regardless of the nature of the violence perpetuated against them (i.e. direct vs. indirect violence), we have a case of violence operating at a structural level distinct

190

from relations of exploitation.

From this analysis of exploitation, violence, and other political phenomena, we have a clearer understanding of the dialectical relationship between violence and power. Exploitation as a distinct phenomenon does in fact generate outcomes of violence, and violence functions to maintain exploitation, but this is not to say that structural violence is reducible to exploitation. In the following sections, we will more specifically investigate the relationship between violence and power through an analysis of structural violence and domination. This analysis will explain the relative independence of structural violence and domination from one another and also demonstrate how the social activity of agents affects both outcomes of violence and particular organized relations of power.

States of domination and institutionalized repression

Domination is the direct control or power that one group has over another group and that serves the interests of the former group against the interests of the latter. In one of Michel Foucault's final interviews, he provides a notion of domination that captures the imbalance between groups with differing degrees of decision-making power.

...states of domination, in which the relations of power, instead of being variable

and allowing different partners a strategy which alters them, find themselves firmly set and congealed. When an individual or a social group manages to block a field of relations of power, to render them impassive and invariable and to prevent all reversibility of movement— by means of instruments which can be economic as well as political or military— we are facing what can be called a state of domination.[140]

Absent such states of domination, relations of power flow more freely in that each actor within these relations has greater ability to alter and shape the outcomes of these relations. The variability of power relations is such that individual actions and reactions create and recreate social relations through the possibility of alterations of movement. However, when the avenues for change and resistance are blocked, individuals are compelled to act in ways not determined by their own choices. In what sense then are these individuals said to be forced into such patterns? As Foucault states above, instruments of violence and political or economic coercion can all prevent actors from "reversing movement." But who exactly uses these instruments and forces actors into such passive and invariable positions of strategic inertia? No one exclusively. These regimes of force may coalesce within certain groups at certain times, but Foucault argues that domination is not simply intentionally organized relations of power that block specific actors in order for those blocking their movement to gain an

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140 Foucault, Michel. "The Ethics of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *The Final Foucault*, edited by James Bernauer and David Rasmussen, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988, p. 3.

advantage for themselves. As he states, "Power is no longer substantially identified with an individual who possesses or exercises it by right of birth; it becomes a machinery that no one owns."[141]

In another account of domination, Herbert Marcuse distinguishes domination from the rational exercise of authority. He states that:

> The latter, which is inherent in any societal division of labor, is derived from knowledge and confined to the administration of functions and arrangements necessary for the advancement of the whole. In contrast, domination is exercised by a particular group or individual in order to sustain and enhance itself in a privileged position. Such domination does not exclude technical, material and intellectual progress, but only as an unavoidable by-product while preserving irrational scarcity, want, and constraint.[142]

Marcuse highlights how particular groups gain and increase social or economic privilege through the "rational utilization of power."[143] This is markedly different from Foucault's approach, though not incompatible with it. For both theorists, domination is the exercise of control by one group over another, whether it is intended or unintended. This control can take a psychological form, in that individual desires and pleasures are constrained, repressed or liberated, or a physical form where bodies are conditioned to follow certain patterns of behavior or work. In this context,

141 Foucault, Michel. "Two Lectures," in *Power/Knowledge*, edited by Colin Gordon, Pantheon Books: New York, 1980, p. 89.
142 Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1966, pp. 36-7.
143 Marcuse, 36.

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the inequality of influence and the differing status and benefits afforded to the dominant group(s)and the subordinate group(s) are also quite evident. For Foucault, those who benefit from domination are those who have variable possibilities for movement and alternatives. They are, in some sense, free to act and resist and their bodies are not subjugated from without, as are the bodies of those who lack variability and freedom of movement (though one can struggle against submission and subjugation from within).[144] For Marcuse, it is the preservation and increase of privilege with regard to material, intellectual and political positions of power and pleasure that separates those in an irrational position of power over others versus those who lack such positions within such repressive regimes. For the organization of production and progress (according to the dominant ideology), material needs (i.e. sexual, psychic, physical, etc.) must be desexualized, repressed and sublimated. When rebellion and the fight to overcome scarcity surfaces within social life, new forms of social control and systems of repression must be introduced in order to preserve and perpetuate conditions which benefit the dominant group(s).

These two accounts of domination provide us with an understanding of domination in terms of intentional and unintentional ways that

144 See Foucault's notion of *assujettissement* in "Subject and Power," in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Volume III*, New York: New Press, 2001, p. 331.

structures of power benefit dominant groups and disadvantage subordinate

groups. From Marcuse's understanding of domination, dominant groups

intentionally use their influence and power over others to preserve the

ways in which organized relations and practices benefit their own interests

and keep subordinate groups powerless to change such relations. Through

repressive measures designed to shape needs in ways that materially

benefit those in irrational positions of power, subordinate groups are

subjugated to the mandates of those dominant ideologies, whether it is

through irrational scarcity or psychological constraint. Given such

intended regulation and organization of relations, the quality of agency

within subordinate groups can be kept at a deficient level so as to block

consciously motivated and collectively organized tactics of resistance that

could undermine such structured arrangements designed to benefit

dominant groups. Within Foucault's notion of states of domination, we

have a method for analyzing the ways that organized relations

unintentionally benefit dominant groups. As we saw in chapter three, the

unintended nonregulation of safety measures within slaughterhouses

demonstrates just this kind of state of domination. When subordinate

groups are blocked from changing such structural arrangements (e.g. lack

of ability to change safety regulations), they are subject to outcomes which

undermine their own motivations and interests within economic and political relations. Consequently, the activity of subordinate groups is organized by the unintentional nonregulation of instruments of production and structures of power which in fact benefit dominant groups.

Distinguishing structural violence from domination

As ugly and calculated as domination might be, direct control or power over another in order to benefit one's own interests is not itself structural violence. Whether or not domination generates harms and injuries to subordinate groups depends upon the quality of agency of those groups plus a variety of other conditions. We must analyze the conditions of domination – the outcomes of the distribution of benefits, the material constraints forced upon subordinate groups, the instruments used to further the domination of certain groups, the ways that subordinate groups are affected by a reduction in their variability of movement – to conclude that violence results from these intentionally or unintentionally organized relations of power. Particular relations of domination can change – new state imposed regulations which may in fact benefit subordinate groups (e.g. new OHSA standards for slaughterhouse industries) – but may in fact

not change levels of worker injuries and deaths overall. As a result, we cannot simply equate changes in relations of domination with changes in particular structural arrangements which propagate violence against subordinate groups.

Conversely, structural violence may in fact be reduced without changing the organization of power relations designed to benefit dominant groups. As stated, the actual presence of structural violence depends upon the quality of agency within particular structural arrangements. When there are clearly organized and self-consciously motivated collective actions that address violence resulting from domination, those subordinate groups who are victims of structural violence may have the ability to change the structural arrangement that makes violence possible against them. Even though those particular states of domination may be unaffected, worker solidarity designed to improve conditions and bargaining power can and does in fact sometimes reduce structural violence. While the domination of transnational garment industries forces sub-contractors to ever increase the exploitation of workers by speeding up production and lowering wages (in order to maintain contracted business with these TNCs), the international reorganization of women's and men's wage-earning labor holds great political possibilities for widespread labor reform and

197

bargaining power, thus increasing the likelihood of benefits afforded to

subordinate groups as well as reductions of violence within the labor

process. While increased state repression against workers threatens those

organizing worker unions in developing countries, with the restructuring of

international labor conditions comes greater possibilities for international

communication and bonds of solidarity between workers. As Mexican and

New Jersey workers as well as Sri Lankan and Saipan workers become

conscious of their collective alienation and exploitation given the

domination of TNCs over their own labor markets (particularly in garment

and agricultural industries), international organizing for the rights of

workers has been steadily increasing. Whether or not the variability of

movement of these subordinate groups increases or the irrational authority

over them is undermined, organized actions of these groups can in fact

reduce violence overall with relatively little, if any, changes to their

subordination.

For Galtung however, such "unequal distributions of power" are

themselves violence. As with his conception of exploitation, it is the

inequality that is for Galtung the source of the social evil in domination

and that categorizes it as violence. As such, it is not the harms and injuries

resulting from the organization of relations between people and their

practices. Given this notion of domination and equation of it with structural violence on the basis of inequality, Galtung is predisposed to conflate these two distinctive phenomena. Against this equation of domination and structural violence, the domination of capitalists within industry and culture over the globe may in fact reduce avoidable harms and injuries overall if financial access to necessary goods is realistically available to the world's poor. It is not self-evident that capitalist domination itself will lead to an increase of violence. Against the position that inequality is structural violence, new organized relations of power emerge within complex structures of domination and violence. In some cases, corporate control over the means of production sparks massive state violence against those who organize labor unions (e.g. Colombian rural workers union SINTRAINAGRO in 2003). In other contexts, workers under similar conditions forge international alliances with labor and human rights organizations and are able to shift the center of gravity in their favor and vastly increase their own bargaining power as well as the foreseeable bargaining power of other associations of workers within their region without directly reducing violence overall (e.g. Kukdong workers in Puebla, Mexico in 2000-01).

From this standpoint, Galtung's understanding of structural violence

199

as indirect and unintended seems less compelling in terms of understanding how violence can be meaningfully said to "operate at a structural level." Within his account, the reality structural violence ends up being a force which subordinate groups are powerless to affect given their position as "underdogs". While the "distribution of power" provides greater freedom to dominant groups and structural violence operates independently of their direct actions, intentions, and motivations, within Galtung's theory only these groups in dominant positions are free to effectively control and change those structures which are said to perpetuate and determine the reality of violence. However, assuming that agents of subordinate groups have a relative degree of freedom to resist structural forces brought to bear upon them (and that Galtung's topdog/underdog dichotomy is highly suspect), there clearly seems to be a role for social action of both dominant and subordinate groups within an understanding of violence at a structural level.

Referring back to our discussion within chapter three, recognizing the dialectical relationship between social structures and human action is one major improvement my account of structural violence makes over Galtung's mechanistic approach. From an understanding of structures as the organization of relations between people and their practices, human

activity is neither merely subsumed under nor containable within particular structures, but rather individuals both confront structural arrangements as forces beyond their choices and interests and also shape those very structures through organized conscious and self-interested activity. As outcomes of antagonistic relations between dominant and subordinate groups, the forces and mechanisms of violence are then not simply under the control of those in dominant positions of power. Structural violence in my account then recognizes that there is a struggle by subordinate groups to establish conditions whereby they are not subject to harms and injuries as a result of routinized relations and practices designed to benefit dominant groups. An increase in the quality of agency in terms of organized collective action can then affect structural changes designed to reduce violence.

Now that I have shown that domination and structural violence are not coterminous, we must evaluate these distinct phenomena separately. Equating these distinct social evils obfuscates why the outcomes of each are either objectionable or not and to what degree these phenomena must be changed. Keeping these two concepts distinct from each other then provides political theorists with a method for articulating what is specifically wrong with certain relations of violence *and* organized relations

of power. Within relations of domination, objections are raised to such power over others given the fact that subordinate groups lack the autonomy to affect and change conditions which affect their choices and activities. With structural violence, those avoidable, socially caused harms and injuries which result from routine relations are the basis for objecting to a particular organization of relations and practices. In the case where these two phenomena intersect – domination generating violence at a structural level – we object to such violence when injury and harms to certain groups are a result of an organization of relations designed to benefit other groups. In addition to the basis for objecting to each of these phenomena separately, what it takes to change these relations is also quite distinct.

Parallel with our discussion of exploitation and structural violence, we must now look at the intersections between domination and structural violence and analyze how violence and power are dialectically related. As I've recognized above, there is a struggle between dominant and subordinate groups to establish conditions beneficial to each. In practice, in many cases structural violence results from the intended regulation or unintended nonregulation of specific relations of power. To articulate the distinctions and interconnections between domination and structural

violence further, in the following section we will consider the struggles over

controlling the world's potable water resources, in terms of access,

ownership and distribution. From this example of water privatization we

will be in a position to see how intentional and unintentional structural

arrangements keep people from accessing necessary goods, how violence

functions to sustain and perpetuate domination, and how greater

organized, motivated, and self-conscious activity on the part of subordinate

groups can change conditions of violence and/or domination. Though TNC

domination over water via privatization efforts makes possible structural

violence against large populations of people and structural violence is a

precondition for the exercise of TNC power, structural violence is not

absolutely determined by or reducible to such states of domination (or

"distributions of power" to use Galtung's phrase). As I will show, we must

also analyze the role that social action plays in the formation,

maintenance, and propagation of structures. With a dialectical

understanding of structures and actions and a clear explanation of the

relationship between violence and power, we have a clear alternative

conception of structural violence which overcomes the problems plaguing

Galtung's account.

Transnational corporate domination through water privatization

In Johannesburg, Detroit, Cochabamba, Tucuman and many other

parts of the world, the battle over water continues to be clearly situated to

benefit now and in the future those who own those infrastructures and

sources of water. Under international trade agreements and institutions

(GATS, WTO, NAFTA, and the upcoming FTAA), water is characterized as

a commodity that can be bought and sold like any other exchangeable

product. Based upon the Dublin Principles of 1992 where water is

understood as "an economic good,"[145] talks at the WTO and the World

Water Forums (The Hague, March 2000 and Kyoto, Japan in February of

2003) have been dominated by those who seek to argue that water should

be understood as a *human need*, thereby open to market forces, and not a

human right, something that all persons are entitled to by birth. As Barlow

and Clarke state, "Water, according to the World Bank and the United

Nations, is a *human need*, not a *human right*. These are not semantics; the

difference in interpretation is crucial. A human need can be supplied in

many ways, especially for those with money. But no one can sell a human

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145 More specifically, the conclusion was that "water has an economic value in all its competing uses
and should be recognized as an economic good." See Reports on the International Conference on
Water and Environment in Dublin, Ireland in January, 1992; *The New Economy of Water: The Risks
and Benefits of Globalization and Privatization of Fresh Water*, Peter H. Gleick, Gary Wolff,
Elizabeth L. Chalecki, Rachel Reyes, Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and
Security, Feb. 2002, p. ii.

right."[146] As nations are forced into contracting out their municipal water facilities to private investors and water distributors through structural adjustment programs associated with IMF and World Bank loans, those who are unable to pay for water must either find other sources (usually non-potable sources) or face dehydration and death. In a 2003 ICIJ report entitled "Promoting Privatization," the ICIJ found that of the projects funded by the World Bank between 1990 and 2002, one third "require the country to privatize its water operations in some form before it received funds." In 1999, Nkobongo, South Africa was one of five areas where programs were put in place that were a part of the government policy called "total cost recovery". Instead of providing water as a social good through public subsidies (thus having residents pay only a fraction of the cost of water), people are now forced to bear the full cost of having running water in their homes. "'Free water is not a good idea,' say Yves Picaud, managing director of Vivendi Water in South Africa...'It is better to ask people to pay very little, but to pay something. Free water gives the impression that water is free, service is free and you can use water as much as you want.'"[147] In practice, millions of people in South Africa have

146 Barlow, Maude and Tony Clarke. *Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop the Corporate Theft of the World's Water*, New York: The New Press, 2002, p. xii.
147 *Metered to Death: How a Water Experiment Caused Riots and a Cholera Epidemic*, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, Feb. 5, 2003, p. 1.

been cut off from service if they cannot pay their bills "that often make up

30% of their income."[148] South African officials claim that 13 million people

now have access to water when they did not have such access under

apartheid. But a report from the Municipal Services Project indicates

"some 700,000 people were affected by cutoffs in the final months of

2001."[149] Dubbed the new apartheid, communities all over South Africa face

widespread crisis by the fact that water is unaffordable to most of the

countries poor and working class populations. By January of 2002, cholera

infected more than 250,000 people and killed almost 300 along South

Africa's Dolphin Coast.[150] To put this in perspective, private companies run

only around five percent of the world's waterworks. In 1990, "about 51

million people got their water from private companies...That figure is now

more than 300 million...the six most globally active water companies over a

12-year period, showed that by 2002, they ran drinking water distribution

networks in at least 56 countries and two territories. In 1990, they had

been active in only about a dozen countries."[151] As a multi-billion dollar

industry, according to Steven Shrybman well in excess of $300 billion per

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148 Ibid., ICIJ, p. 1.
149 "Water Tap Often Shut to South Africa Poor," Ginger Thompson, *NY Times*, 29 May 2003.
150 2003 Report *Cholera and the Age of the Water Barons*, ICIJ, p. 1.
151 Ibid., p. 2.

year[152], the incentive to push for water privatization then is huge for big

TNCs like Vivendi and Suez Lyonnaise. These two French-based

multinationals together control more than 50% of the world's water

market. As Bechtel (U.S.-based) and RWE Entsorgung (German-based)

compete for contracts in the Middle East, among other areas, we see

intensive lobbying for buying up weakened or non-existent water delivery

systems, greater investment in water transportation technologies across

oceans, and for broad trade agreement language which opens the door for

the greater commodification of all kinds of water uses (e.g. recreational,

agricultural, industrial, residential, etc).

As a result of the increasing allure of profits from such a universally-

needed good, the increasing need for safe drinking water for those 1.1

billion people without such access, and the imperative to end the more than

2 million deaths a year resulting from water-born diseases, the wars over

how water access is to be structured is fought on many fronts and between

many differing groups. While provisions under NAFTA and the WTO

threatens current policy measures and laws at a national and local level to

protect non-renewable or fragile water sources (e.g. barriers to trading

water fought against under public-private partnerships, so-called P3), local

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152 *Thirst for Control: New Rules in the Global Water Grab*, Council of Canadians, January 2002, p. 22-
   23.

communities fight between one another in order to find ways to increase

the ability to raise capital for generating local revenues (e.g. Great Lakes

Basin region, Lake Victoria in East Africa, etc.). As Shrybman states, "A

typical P3 involves a joint venture between a transnational water

corporation and local or regional government in which the former contracts

to design, build and operate water-treatment and filtration plants, for

periods as long as 40 years..."[153] Under such P3 agreements, local

communities enter into a foreign-investment relationship, whether they

know it or not. When privatization contracts breakdown or residents refuse

to pay outrageous fees and costs, as in the case of Cochabamba, Bolivia,

companies are able to sue these governments under the auspices of the

WTO and GATS (or NAFTA, as one pending case may show[154]). In the case

of Cochabamba, enraged citizens forced the Bolivian government to cancel

its deal with Aguas de Tunari (a subsidiary of Bechtel). According to recent

accounts, Aguas de Tunari "has now invoked a bilateral investment treaty

between Bolivia and the Netherlands to claim more than US$25 million in

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153 Ibid., p. 24.
154 A Feb 22, 2002 lawsuit against Great Spring Waters of America (a subsidiary of the Perrier Group of
    America, owned by Nestle) by the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, the Grand Traverse
    Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians is still pending.
    Calling for an enforcement of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), these Tribes want to
    halt the exportation of 500,000-750,000 gallons of water a day from the Great Lakes region. It is
    suspected that Great Spring Waters of America may argue that under Article 201(1) of NAFTA that
    this water can be traded given its status as an economic good.

damages for breach of its contract to supply water to the city of

Cochabamba."[155] Jim Schultz, the key Anglo-activist reporter who

painstaking followed this struggle, states that:

> Bechtel didn't invest anything close to $25 million in Bolivia in the few months it operated in Cochabamba. Bechtel officials paid for its rental cars and five star hotel rooms with funds from the public water company it took over and Bechtel left behind an unpaid electric bill of $90,000. Bechtel use of the World Bank's secret trade court (the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes ICSID) is a case study of globalization run amok. Bechtel is masquerading as a Dutch company, shifting its Bolivian registration to an Amsterdam post office box in hopes of getting covered by a Bolivia-Holland treaty that makes the Bank the arbiter of their investment disputes.[156]

In response, over 300 citizen groups in 41 different countries filed an

International Citizen's Petition with the World Bank demanding that the

doors of the hearing be open to public scrutiny. As Maude Barlow states,

"The Bolivian water revolt has had an enormous impact on the global fight

for water rights...Many people feel that if some of the planet's poorest and

disenfranchised people could stand up to the World Bank and Bechtel, so

can all of us."[157]

From this extended example, we can more clearly see the

distinctions and interconnections between domination and structural

violence. The fact that water TNCs tend to have power over local and

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155 Ibid., Shrybman, p. 59.
156 *Bolivia's War Over Water: The Full History,* The Democracy Center, http://www.democracyctr.org/bechtel/the_water_war.htm.
157 Ibid.

national communities under P3 agreements, to heavily influence WWF,

WTO and FTAA summit talks and internal sidebar discussions, and to

openly argue for the commodification of water (among other historic public

goods) is not to say that these companies perpetuate structural violence.

These forms of power over communities through direct control of the

organization of present and future economic arrangements places these

TNCs in an advantageous position to greatly profit off of water scarcities in

the coming decades. These structural arrangements also tend to perpetuate

violence against subordinate groups, in terms of water-born diseases from

non-potable sources and dehydration from lack of access to any water

beyond urban water infrastructures. But structural violence within this

context is the avoidable harms and injuries that result from these

contingent social, economic and political conditions and not simply the

power one group has over another.

Contrary to Galtung's equation of structural violence and

domination, power is not distributed in such a way that the domination of

water TNCs makes inevitable the impediments to actualizing potential for

those communities subordinated to the dictates of topdogs. In these

struggles over the access to and control of water distribution and

ownership, actual outcomes of harms and injuries are dependent upon

complex of social, cultural and politico-economic factors, thus evading a reduction of these struggles to topdog/underdog power dichotomies. National governments can develop internal measures to insure that TNC domination of water infrastructures doesn't leave people without any access to potable water. In such cases, relations of domination can remain relatively stable while harms and injuries to populations of people are reduced overall. We also find other concrete cases where changes to the structural arrangements that produce violence can be resisted. Where financial impediments block water access, people like Richard Makolo, leader of the Crisis Water Committee in Orange Farm (25 miles south of Johannesburg), engage in social actions to confront such structural arrangements. Arguing that "Privatization is a new kind of apartheid... it separates the rich from the poor," Makolo states that one should "destroy the meters and enjoy the water." In response to "illegal water flows" to Chatsworth, Orange Farm and other areas, city councils, politicians and water corporations came up with the idea of prepaid meters so that residents can use what they can pay for. Communities are still finding ways to resist structural measures designed to benefit water TNCs through the introduction of neighborhood water collectives and "illegal" tapping into pipelines. People also continue to tie up the courts with demands for water

on the basis of the South African Constitutional statement that everyone would be "provided for 'sufficient' water as the right of every citizen."[158]

Furthermore, we find impediments to freedom within this struggle without specific harms and injuries. Galtung sees merit in extending our understanding of violence to include obstacles to freedom; but as I have shown previously, this overextension of violence stretches the concept to include cases covered by other concepts which point to specific aspects of social relations. In addition to increased vagueness, this overextension takes away any ability to criticize relations of power on the specific basis of the harms and injuries produced by intended regulations and unintended nonregulations. Relying on an understanding of violence as avoidable, socially-caused harms and injuries aids political theorists in being able to address and argue for a reduction of violence within structural arrangements independent of other distinct social evils (i.e. oppression, inequality, etc.). Instead of having a normative meta-category which lacks distinctiveness, my alternative account of structural violence captures how relations of power affect subordinate groups and how those groups can and do resist such organized power relations.

Within this discussion of water privatization, capitalist domination

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158 Desai, Ashwin. *We are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, New York: Monthly Review, 2002, p. 70.

over communities through the ownership and control of water resources is a continual reorganization of economic and political relations so as to block groups from accessing what they need if they cannot fulfill the demands of those who own these vital resources. Here threats of violence can and do function to secure and increase profits for those in dominant positions of power. Within such power struggles over the terms of access and ownership to water we find that conditions must be set so as to also benefit capital, both in the short run (as in the case of Bechtel and Bolivia) and in the long run (as in the cases of international trade agreements and national laws regarding the trade of water). While overt violence has not been widely used to protect ownership rights and profitability, we do find clear evidence of indirect violence within this struggle over water access and consumption. Within the restructuring of national political and economic relations to benefit capital accumulation, there is marked indifference to the fact that when particular groups are blocked from assessing those goods which are necessary for basic subsistence because of a lack of financial means, violence does occur even though it is in many instances unintended and unpredictable. Companies demand that they profit from their financial investments to build up sustainable water delivery infrastructures with little concern for the market and non-market

forces that keep people from being able to pay for access. This indifference to people facing inevitable dehydration and water-born diseases sets the conditions for massive bodily harms and injuries to occur against these populations of people. From this perspective then, structural violence is not the same as widespread states of total domination (i.e. the total control of potable water delivery systems within a particular region) but it is the harms and injuries which result from particular organized relations designed to benefit dominant groups. While particular relations of power allow violence through its unintended nonregulation or intended regulation (or even intended *de*regulation), violence is not reducible to these power relations.

Conclusion

We now can see how my account is distinct from Galtung's understanding of structural violence and his notion of power. First, by distinguishing structural violence from domination and exploitation – those two key forms of power which are equated with structural violence by Galtung – my approach shows how structural violence differs from organized relations of power. Second, relations of power do in many cases

though organize conditions in such a way that violence is likely or inevitable to occur. In cases like fights over the privatization of public goods, systemic harms and injuries typically occur when coercive techniques and severe restrictions of movement are imposed on subordinate groups and the organized and self-consciously motivated interests of these subordinate groups are relatively undeveloped. Third, conversely, violence is an instrument of power that further crystallizes particular organized relations of power. Both in the case of slaughterhouses and garment industries, perpetual injury and death as well as the threats of unemployment and unmet needs that likely lead to violence organizes relations into patterns of activity that are designed to benefit dominant groups. Nevertheless, despite such states of domination and relations of exploitation perpetuating structural violence, we must also recognize the dialectical relationship between social structures and human activity. Within my account of structural violence, we are able to evaluate the distinctive phenomenon of violence apart from identifiable agents and particular "distributions of power." Also, maintaining a clear understanding of the ways that structures organize social activity *and* also how agents affect and change structures themselves is an important step in overcoming Galtung's reduction of relations of violence to distributions of

power. Instead of reifying structures as the propagators of violence based upon an understanding of power as a distributed good, my account of structural violence recognizes the complex relations of power that underlie, but that are also shaped by, particular relations of violence through a dialectical understanding of structures and action.

Conclusion: Benefits and Directions for Structural Violence

In my account of structural violence, we now have a method for analyzing and evaluating violence within routine activities and institutional contexts. Beyond discrete acts done by particular agents to others, we are able to theorize instances of violence that also arise from the unintended consequences of institutional practices. One major problem with a traditional approach is that the analysis and evaluation of violence is limited to the motivations, intentions, and actions of individuals. As chapter one demonstrates, there are a host of cases of violence which go untheorized as such under this narrow approach. In an attempt to overcome this limitation, Galtung proposes that our notion of violence itself be extended to include needs deprivations and gaps between potential and actual realizations. From the work in chapters two and three, we find that this extension of violence lacks conceptual clarity for distinguishing violence from other kinds of political phenomena (i.e. oppression, domination, exploitation, discrimination, etc.). Furthermore, Galtung's account lacks normative distinctiveness when evaluating instances of social evils that cause avoidable harm and injury to persons where no agents are directly responsible for these outcomes of violence.

217

By conceptualizing violence at a structural level we are able to address specific ethical questions and objections to institutional activity without thereby reducing our questions and objections to localized causes arising from particular acts of individuals. We can then raise questions of the legitimacy of particular practices and patterns of activity in the specific context of the harms and injuries that result from such practices and activity. This approach is beneficial for an ethical criticism of institutional life. Accusations of violence continue to hold political force for furthering ethical criticisms of institutional life within our political culture. Such accusations compel those accused persons or groups to publicly respond and justify their activities and practices that are said to cause violence. By recognizing violence beyond SAO relations within an account of structural violence, those groups who are victims of structural violence and those organized movements fighting against structural violence are then able to openly and publicly criticize policies and practices that may be beyond their direct control to change. From such criticisms, movements may open a public dialogue that can address the presence of violence within civil society and/or state institutions.

From the standpoint of specifically criticizing political and economic institutions on the basis of violence, subordinate groups and social

movements are able to rely upon the political force and weight of violence

to rectify harms and injuries which either the activity of formal political

institutions unintentionally propagates against its own citizens and

peoples or economic activity generates unreflectively from market relations

and productive forces. Given the ever-expanding monopoly of the

instruments and claims to legitimate uses of violence within the state and

particular international institutions (e.g. UN), the recognition of violence

at a policy level within state or international institutions thereby places an

onus upon officials of these institutions to justify activities which result in

harms and injuries to others. Similarly, market relations and productive

forces which cause and maintain structural violence can be addressed at a

policy level, whether specifically in the context of international trade

agreements or transnational economic decision-making bodies.

Within my account, we find a further benefit to an analysis of

violence at a structural level in that we can begin to develop and address

ideological distortions of violence through this alternative notion of

structural violence. If violence is not seen *as* violence – that is, if violence is

perceived as an inevitable part of life or a necessary aspect of rational

processes within a particular social order[159] – the ability for groups to

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159 Here we may think of the critique of purposive-rational action – the "rationality" of capitalist forces
    and relations of production obfuscating a truly rational and critical standard – as discussed by

219

confront and change organized relations which sustain violence is greatly

undermined, if not entirely blocked. Victims of structural violence won't be

recognized as such and the need for society to address the systemic

problems of violence against them will be thwarted if structural violence is

not a reality present to the public at large. As Nancy Fraser demonstrates,

when legal discourses are designed to couch legal disputes in terms that

prescribe the boundaries for such disputes (i.e. within a grammar of legal

reasoning that is individualistic), injustices which arise as a result of

systemic processes go unnoticed. As she states,

> ...the deep grammar of individualist justice present obstacles to anyone who seeks judicial standing to claim that a systemic injustice has occurred. Thus, even before legal judging officially begins, there has already been an operation of prejudgment that has severely restricted the scope of the judge-able.[160]

Such prejudgments, in our case prejudgments about violence, affect

whether people perceive of actual instances of harm and injuries as

occurring at all. Uncovering the reality of structural violence within

institutional life that prescribes standards for judgment of those

institutional practices, then, is a precondition for such ethical criticisms

and questions of legitimacy noted above. Through my account of structural

violence, we can develop and expand our thinking on violence at an

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Habermas in "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'," in *Critical Theory: The Essential Readings*, edited by David Ingram and Julia Simon-Ingram, St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 1992, pp. 118ff.
160 Fraser, ibid., 87.

institutional level where it is claimed that violence is absent from those institutional relations and practices.

Despite the advantages that structural violence affords us for ethical criticisms of institutional life, there are at least two outstanding problems that any account of structural violence, including my own, must confront. First, beyond the scope of this project, but nonetheless a serious question for further inquiry, is whether structural violence is contingent upon particular conditions or if it is an unavoidable feature of social life. Is structural violence a permanent feature of most, if not all, societies or does it only arise within given social orders? Pre-capitalist societies were organized in ways that generate unintended and avoidable socially-caused harms against certain social groups so the genesis of structural violence is not with the birth of capitalism (e.g. rights of citizens versus non-citizens in ancient Greece, etc.). If, then, structural violence is not simply a feature of capitalist societies, but is present in other social orders, is it preventable and substantially alterable or might structural violence be an inevitable reality that is "part of life"? If we find that no societies are free of structural violence, what does the recognition of it do for political theorists interested in questions of social justice? This brings us to the other outstanding problem with any account of structural violence: that the

recognition of structural violence is necessarily the recognition of a social evil that ought to be rooted out of social life.

Most theorists of extended notions of violence build into their accounts the understanding that a recognition of structural violence is the recognition of a social evil that ought to be eradicated and changed. But to what extent is this necessarily the case that structural violence is a social evil that must in all cases be eradicated and changed? Upon further investigation into the affects of structural violence, we may find that structural violence serves, in certain cases, to either keep violence overall at a manageable level or bring about goods of great social value to a particular society (e.g. water privatization curtailing global water wars, highly polluting methods of production bringing increased economic benefits, etc.). To simply assume that societies would in all cases be better off with a reduction of all instances of structural violence evades the ways that structural violence might be situated as a necessary social evil to ensure sustainability of vital relations which are of high social value. To what extent does the presence of structural violence keep acts of direct violence to a minimum? This is an open question. Situating structural violence in relationship to other social evils and social goods then is important so that as theorists of violence we avoid both atomizing

explanations of instances of violence and polarizing ethical judgments about violence in its direct or structural form.

As philosophers of violence, we have many important questions and problems to address if we are to aid in damming the rising tide of violence. In order to bring about necessary social change and reductions in levels of violence, we must understand the phenomena we are confronting and how it is integrated within networks of social relations. Through this alternative account of structural violence, we have identified the distinct place that violence occupies within particular relations of power and the ways that violence functions beyond the immediate activity of identifiable agents. Moving from a recognition of structural violence as a distinct reality of violence, we must begin to address ways that institutional life sustains or undermines relations of violence in order to bring about more peaceful social orders.

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