The Conceptual Pattern of Fascist Ideology: A Reassessment

O Padrão Conceptual da Ideologia Fascista: Uma Reavaliação

El Patrón Conceptual de la Ideología Fascista: Una Reevaluación

*Carlos Manuel Gonçalves Pereira Martins**

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7547-5308

ABSTRACT: In spite of all the definitions of fascism that were put forward in the last decades and the "consensus" that was created around the definition proposed by Roger Griffin (which focuses on the ultranationalist and palingenetic core of fascism), authors like Michel Dobry have criticized the tendency to opt for what they see as "essentialist" approaches and to worry too much with classifications. Nevertheless, I argue that, although the more dynamic aspects of fascist ideology must be kept in mind, definitions and classifications are a necessary component of the work of the historian that tries to make sense of the era of fascism. For this reason, I here have the goal of arriving at a new definition of fascism by making use of the conceptual morphological approach, put forward by Michael Freeden, which has never been systematically applied to the study of fascism and can lead us to new and interesting conclusions about the nature of this ideology. This essay is, thus, a reassessment of a research that I previously carried out and shall be read as a refined version of that study, which tried to define fascism through the core concepts that are part of its conceptual pattern. As it is made clear in the text, the concepts that I believe to be central to fascism are: Nation, State, Synthesis, Revolution, Authority and Violence.

Keywords: Fascism. Ideology. Concepts.

RESUMO: Apesar de todas as definições de fascismo que foram apresentadas nas últimas décadas e do "consenso" que se criou em torno da definição proposta por Roger Griffin (que se foca nas características ultranacionalistas e palingenéticas do fascismo), autores como Michel Dobry

---

* Investigador no Instituto de Ciências Socias da Universidade de Lisboa. Doutorado em Política Comparada pelo Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa. Autor dos livros *From Hitler to Codreanu: The Ideology of Fascit Leaders* e *Fascismos: Para Além de Hitler e Mussolini*. A área de estudo é a ciência política, mais precisamente estudos sobe o fascismo, autoritarismos e história das ideias políticas. E-mail: cmgpm87@gmail.com

criticaram a tendência para se optar por aquilo que vêm como abordagens "essencialistas", bem como a preocupação excessiva com classificações. Contudo, neste artigo, defendo que, apesar de os aspetos mais dinâmicos da ideologia fascista precisarem de ser levados em conta, as definições e classificações são uma componente necessária do trabalho do historiador que tenta compreender a era do fascismo. Por essa razão, o meu objetivo neste ensaio é o de chegar a uma nova definição de fascismo, utilizando a abordagem conceptual morfológica, apresentada por Michael Freeden, que nunca foi usada de forma sistemática num estudo sobre o fascismo e que nos pode levar a novas e interessantes conclusões acerca da natureza desta ideologia. Este ensaio é, portanto, uma reavaliação de uma pesquisa que realizei anteriormente e deve ser lido como uma versão melhorada desse estudo, que tentava definir o fascismo através dos conceitos centrais que fazem parte do seu padrão conceptual. Como é descrito no corpo do texto, os conceitos que acredito serem centrais ao fascismo são: Nação, Estado, Síntese, Revolução, Autoridade e Violência.

Palavras-Chave: Fascismo. Ideologia. Conceitos.

RESUMEN: A pesar de todas las definiciones de fascismo que se han presentado en las últimas décadas y del "consenso" que se ha creado en torno a la definición propuesta por Roger Griffin (que se centra en las características ultranacionalistas y palingenéticas del fascismo), autores como Michel Dobry han criticado la tendencia para se optar por lo que vem como enfoques "essencialistas", así como la excesiva preocupación por las clasificaciones. Sin embargo, defiendo que, si bien es necesario tener en cuenta los aspectos más dinámicos de la ideologia fascista, las definiciones y clasificaciones son un componente necessário del trabajo del historiador que intenta compreender la era del fascismo. Por esa razón, mi objetivo en este ensayo es el de llegar a una neva definición de fascismo, utilizando el enfoque conceptual morfológico, presentado por Michael Freeden, que nunca há sido utilizado de manera sistemática en un estúdio del fascismo y que puede llevarnos a nuevas y interessantes conclusiones sobre la naturaleza de esta ideología. Este ensayo es, por lo tanto, una reevaluación de una investigácion que realicé anteriormente y debe leerse como una versión mejorada de esse estúdio, que intentaba definir el fascismo a través de los conceptos centrales que forman parte de su patrón conceptual. Como se describe en el cuerpo del texto, los conceptos que considero centrales en el fascismo son: Nación, Estado, Síntesis, Revolución, Autoridad y Violencia.

Palabras Clabe: Fascismo. Ideología. Conceptos.

***

Introduction

The last 30 years were not unfruitful in the formulation of definitions of fascism that have greatly contributed to our understanding of this ideology. For instance, one can mention the typological description of fascism by Stanley Payne (1995, 7), which defines it according to its ideology and goals, its negations (the ideologies that fascism opposed) and its features of style and organization. Likewise, it is important to refer Roger Eatwell (2003, xxiv) and his definition of fascism as an ideology that "sought to create a "new man" (especially an elite) who would forge a holistic nation and radical Third Way State"; as well as Michael Mann (2004, 20-24) who stated that this political phenomenon was characterized by five core features: Nationalism, Statism, Transcendence, Cleansing and Paramilitarism. Nevertheless, no definition has been so influential as the one put forward by Roger Griffin who, using the Weberian methodology of the ideal-type, came to the conclusion that fascism could be best described as a "genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism" (Griffin 2013, 26). According to this historian, the main feature of fascist ideology is thus that of having as its core goal the total "rebirth" of the national community, hence his use of the word "palingenetic", which comes from Greek and means something close to "born again". This concise definition gained considerable recognition among students of fascism and is nowadays the one which most experts seem to agree with or at least acknowledge its relevance. The acceptance of the "griffinian" definition was impactful enough for Roger Griffin himself to affirm that there finally seemed to be a "consensus" about the ultranationalist and palingenetic core of fascism (Griffin 2003, 97).

However, in the last decade, some authors have questioned some of the main assumptions and conclusions held by Griffin and other researchers mentioned in the last paragraph. Namely, Michel Dobry (2011, 75) has criticized what he sees as "essentialist" approaches, that is, approaches that tend to see in fascism a phenomenon that is clearly separated from other ideologies and political movements and that can be defined through some abstraction. According to Dobry, historians of fascism should stop worrying with classifications and definitions and rather pay attention to the dynamic aspects of the ideology, the interactions between fascism and other movements and the subjective aspects of ideological self-classification. The relational approach, proposed by this author, thus shifts the focus from definitions of fascism to what he terms the "competitive social spaces" and to the struggles for meaning that try to take hold of contested concepts and themes. Differently from supposed essentialist approaches (one should notice that

Griffin himself has always rejected that his approach was an essentialist one)[1], Dobry's studies do not see ideologies as something fixed, but rather as a dynamic phenomenon, which *a priori* classifications do nothing to clarify. If we divide the approaches to political ideologies according to the dichotomy fixity/dynamism, Dobry's studies clearly fall on the side of "dynamism".

For our purposes, we reject some of Dobry's implications, for they would mean the impossibility and even the uselessness of employing any definition of fascism, whatever that might be. Furthermore, this would lead to the "renunciation of an instrument so necessary to the historian as conceptualization" (Saz et. al. 2019, 10). After all, the use of classifications and definitions is an important part of the work of the researcher that tries to make sense of the political scenario of a given era, and feels the necessity of distinguishing the different political actors and the goals and ideas that set them apart from each other. Classifications should, therefore, serve as a guide to the students of historical fascism, even if one should always bear in mind the dynamic dimension of ideologies and the processes of transformation that they could experience thanks to interactions with other political actors. Following what has just been said, I reiterate the pertinence of defining fascist ideology and making use of a classification that is capable of grouping in it several variants that emerged in different countries and even in different epochs (even though, in this study, the focus is limited to the interwar period).

It is to the presentation of such a definition that this essay is dedicated, representing, above all, a reassessment of a definition of fascism that was put forward in a previous work of mine (Martins 2019). Such a reassessment becomes necessary due to the inevitable reflections that tend to constantly make one change previous hypothesis or conclusions, and which are an unescapable part of academic research. Thus, this essay intends to present a more refined version of a definition of fascism that was previously elaborated, but which has now been improved and enriched with new references and some important changes. In the next pages, the reader will find a discussion of the approach that I used in order to arrive at this new definition, as well as detailed account of the features that I defend to be fundamental in fascist ideology. Finally, the last section will summarize in just one sentence a new definition of fascism that will be based upon the features previously described and that is expected to be of use to other researchers and students of this political phenomenon. While I do not dare to state that this is the definitive version of my definition of fascism, it is undoubtedly an ameliorated one.

---

[1] When writing about his approach, Griffin states that "there is clearly no question of it revealing the "essence" of fascism […] It is the result of consciously elaborating, formulating and systematizing a pattern "seen" by me at a largely intuitive or unconscious level" (Griffin 2013, 19).

Before continuing, I must only clarify that the pertinence of this new definition is related to its employment of the conceptual morphological approach (of which more will be said in the next section) which was put forward by Michael Freeden and uses political concepts as the main unity of analysis. Before my study, this approach had not yet been applied in a systematic study of fascist ideology and, for this reason, as it will be shown, it can lead us to new and interesting conclusions about its content and defining components. By using this approach, I arrived at a new definition of what is sometimes called "generic fascism" which I believe summarizes the main characteristics shared by all variants of the ideology. Besides, and even though this dimension will not be dealt with in this study, this approach also has the advantage of being able to grasp the issues mentioned by Michel Dobry, which are more related to dynamism than to fixity. It is thus important to notice that future studies inspired by this approach can opt for analyzing how the meaning and understanding of core fascist concepts were altered or reconfigured due to the dynamic interactions between fascism and its competitors. The conceptual morphological approach can, therefore, be applied to understand both the fixed and the dynamic dimensions of ideologies, which is an additional argument to defend its relevance in the context of studies about fascism.

Lastly, I must dedicate a word to Roger Griffin's idea of a "consensus" and his definition of fascism as "palingenetic ultranationalism". Like every researcher of historical fascism of the last three decades, I gladly acknowledge my debt to his work and believe that his concise description of the ideological core of fascism is meritorious. Thus, I do not intend to reject his definition but rather present one that is a little more detailed and that, while also including the core "griffinian" features (or, at least, some correspondent), is capable of placing at the core of fascism some characteristics that Roger Griffin would probably see as secondary. By describing fascism in a more detailed phrase, but still with some level of concision, I thus hope to help other students understanding what is at the basis of fascist ideology and, hopefully, influence their research. In the end, my work must not be seen as a fierce criticism against Roger Griffin, but rather as an attempt to complement his work that can be read side by side with *The Nature of Fascism*. Having said all this, we can now proceed to a more detailed explanation of the conceptual morphological approach.

The conceptual Morphological Approach

The conceptual morphological approach was put forward by Michael Freeden in his groundbreaking book *Ideologies and Political Theory*.[2] In it, Freeden states that his aim is that of interpreting the content of ideologies, rather than unmasking the functions that they play in society. This author sees ideologies as patterns of thought that carry unique meanings and a specific internal logic, and make use of political concepts (Freeden 1995, 5). Each conceptual pattern, therefore, represents a unique configuration of political concepts that are structured in a specific way and interlink between each other, thus creating a meaning that distinguishes itself from other ideological patterns (Ibid, 53). The goal of the conceptual morphological approach is that of unraveling the morphology of the interlinkages between concepts and thanks to this decode the meaning of a given pattern. As it is also stated by Freeden (1995, 4), since all concepts are "contested" in nature, the same political concept can acquire different meanings depending on the pattern in which it is inserted, the way how it is combined with other concepts and the position that it occupies (for instance, the concept of "Liberty" can have a different meaning if it is in the conceptual pattern of liberal ideology or in the pattern of socialist ideology). The conceptual morphological approach must pay attention to this aspect in order to decode the signification of the concepts of a given pattern.

Always according to Freeden, the features of an ideological pattern to which the conceptual approach must pay attention to are the following: - *Priority*, for the concepts occupy different hierarchical positions in a given pattern, thus existing core concepts (those that are fundamental to the ideology) and peripheral concepts (among these, we find marginal concepts, which are secondary to the meaning of the ideology); -*Proximity*, for, in a given pattern, concepts are placed in the vicinity of other concepts, with which they interlink, being thus necessary to mention adjacent concepts, that is, those concepts that are placed in the proximity of core concepts and help them gaining a specific meaning; - *Permeability*, which, among other things, refers to the way how different ideological patterns intersect between each other, thus leading to mutual influences between distinct ideologies and to the appearance of the same concepts and interlinkages in two or more ideological patterns;- *Priority*, which refers to the proportional importance that is given to the concepts of a given ideological pattern.

Having said all this, I argue that fascism can, like every other ideology, be understood as a conceptual pattern capable of being interpreted through the use of Freeden's approach. Even if some authors see this ideology as a particularly irrational one (and therefore not prone to the kind

---

[2] A more detailed explanation of the conceptual morphological approach can be found in my previous work (Martins 2019, 6-9).

of political thinking that Freeden talks about), the truth is that fascism could not dispense with a doctrinal content of some kind. As argued by Michael Mann, fascism had a doctrine in which its followers believed and which displayed specific goals and assumptions. Fascists did "offer plausible solutions to modern social problems" and they "believed in certain things" (Mann 2004, 9-10). For this reason, and in spite of all its irrationality, fascism also included an ideological content that could be as rational and coherent as that of ideologies like liberalism, conservatism or socialism and that can be approached with the analytic tools summarized in the last paragraphs.[3] Therefore, in the following sections, I will present the conceptual pattern of what can be seen as the doctrine of "generic fascism", that is, a conceptual pattern whose features (core concepts, interlinkages and other components) are noticeable in the ideological content of all variants of fascist doctrine. Such conceptual pattern, which will be used to arrive at a phrase that defines fascism, represents a configuration that is possible to be found in all permutations of fascism. While each permutation may display specific characteristics and introduce different concepts and interlinkages, they will end up showing the core features that are present in the pattern of "generic fascism" and can thus be considered as a variant of the main ideology.

The conceptual pattern that is about to be described can thus be seen as a starting point for the study of several variants of fascism, since it aims to provide researchers with a framework with which to interpret their content and look for recurrent interlinkages, as well as original features that may not be present in "generic fascism" and are unique to a given permutation. Likewise, and even though, as it has already been said, this topic will not be addressed here, this conceptual framework can also be applied in a study that pays attention to the dynamism of ideology and to the relational aspects to which Michel Dobry calls attention. In such a study, this framework will allow one to understand how the struggle for meaning and the interaction between fascists and their competitors led to reconfigurations and alterations in the ideological pattern of fascism. Nonetheless, the most important aspects to bear in mind here is that my conceptual framework of fascism is mainly based on its core concepts, but also relies heavily on the adjacent concepts that are present in their vicinity and help them gain meaning. Thus, the following section will consist of an explanation of each of the core concepts that I chose to include and the adjacent concepts that are linked to it.

After that section, since all the concepts of an ideological pattern interlink between each other at one level or another, I will comment on the interlinkages between core and adjacent

---

[3] I tis also important to mention Salvatore Garau (2015, 10-11), who argues that ideologies can be understood in three ways: a metapolitical drive, a mentality and a doctrinal core.

concepts and on how such interlinkages give fascist ideology a meaning that is unique to it. Furthermore, my unraveling of the fascist pattern will also briefly mention other important aspects that are relevant to the study of its ideological content, even if the limits of space do not allow for a detailed description of them: - marginal concepts; - concepts that show how fascism permeated with other ideologies; - concepts that explain the rejections of fascism, that is, the ideologies that fascism opposed on the basis of a different understanding of some key concepts (even though this aspect is not addressed by Freeden, I argue that the fact that many researchers have payed attention to the so called "fascist negations", sometimes even trying to define this ideology through them, shows that it is important to bear them in mind when addressing the features of the fascist conceptual pattern); and the internal contradictions of fascism, that is, the tensions between concepts that risk bringing some inconsistency to its ideological content, as well as the logical instruments and reconfigurations that are used to solved them.

After all this, in my conclusion I will present a sentence that defines fascist ideology and is mainly based on the core concepts that I will have by then described. Before proceeding, I must mention once again that this ideological pattern of "generic fascism" represents a reevaluation of a pattern previously elaborated by me, in which some changes were made, and which was arrived at through a close reading of an anthology of fascist texts compiled by Roger Griffin and simply entitled *Fascism*,[4] but also of some other important fascist sources, including the classic *The Doctrine of Fascism*, written by Benito Mussolini and the philosopher Giovani Gentile, as well as *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler, among many others. The core concepts and the main interlinkages contained in it are here considered to be defining features of fascism, for they will be present in every permutation. Nevertheless, I will make a reference to some specific variant of fascism every time it makes sense to call attention to a unique feature or rearrangement in a given permutation. Likewise, I will also draw attention to ideological features that could be present in some moments of the development of the same variant, but not in others. For instance, when comparing fascist movements to fascist regimes (in the cases in which a movement conquered political power), one can find in the former some ideological characteristics that were later altered. However, such specifics of those permutations do not preclude their inclusion in the main configuration of "generic fascism", since they share with it the core features.

---

[4] Since I quote profusely from this book, I will indicate the pages from which the quotes are taken instead of discriminating the sections with texts written by specific individuals, for this might become confusing for the reader. The book that I talk about is Griffin (1995).

The Core Concepts of Fascism

The fascist conceptual pattern that I will now present is composed by six core concepts: Nation, State, Synthesis, Revolution, Authority and Violence. I will discuss each of them and their adjacent concepts in the following pages.

The **Nation** is perhaps the least controversial of all the concepts that are here included, since this is "practically the only common denominator of all previous accounts of fascism's definitional characteristics" (Griffin 2013, 38). As it is widely acknowledged, the Nation is at the core of fascist ideology because all of its goals were somehow subordinated to the idea of aggrandizing the national community and lead it to the realization of some greater objective. The Nation, therefore, is the central preoccupation of every fascist and it is to it that fascist militants must consecrate their lives. One finds evidence of such commitment to nationalism, for instance, when one reads the text *Greater Britain* by British fascist Oswald Mosley, in which it is said that "we are essentially a national movement, and if our policy could be summarized in two words, they would be *Britain First*" (Mosley 1932, 14). But perhaps no other fascist summed up the importance of the Nation better than Mussolini himself, when he affirmed, during a speech at a Congress in Naples, three days before the March on Rome, that "our myth is the nation, our myth is the greatness of the nation! And to this myth, this greatness, which we want to translate into a total reality, we subordinate everything else" (Griffin 1995, 44). However, in the same speech, the leader of Italian Fascism proceeds to state that "a nation is not just territory, but something spiritual", thus revealing that fascists conceive the Nation in a way that differs from other ideologies. This spiritual dimension of the Nation is also emphasized by Romanian leader Corneliu Codreanu, when he says that "the Nation is an entity which prolongs her existence even beyond this earth" and that encompasses in it "all Romanians, alive and dead, who have lived on this land from the beginning of history and will live here also in the future" (Codreanu 1976, 54).

Thus, the first adjacent concept that it is important to refer in the vicinity of the Nation is that of "mission", since it refers to the specific task that the national community needs to perform in order to achieve its greatness. Such a task could have both a spiritual and a more material dimension. Probably the speech in which this "nationalism of the mission" is best expressed is the one given by the Spanish leader of Falangism José Antonio Primo de Rivera, who states that "a nation is a unity of destiny in the universal order, it is a plane to which a people has risen when it fulfils a universal mission in History" (Primo de Rivera 1950, 27). This historical "mission" to accomplish could display distinct meanings in different permutations of fascism but it always pointed to the idea that it was this distinct task that separated a given national community from

every other Nation and gave it its own identity and its right to existence. It is for this reason that in *The Doctrine of* Fascism, it is said that a nation is "a people, historically perpetuating itself; a multitude unified by an idea and imbued with the will to live, the will to power, self-consciousness, personality" (Mussolini 1932, "Rejecting Individualism and the Importance of the State").[5] In the case of Codreanu, for instance, the mission acquires the most patent spiritual dimension when this leader affirms that the final goal of the Nation is the salvation and resurrection in the afterlife. According to him, "the final aim is not life but resurrection. The resurrection of peoples in the name of Jesus Christ" (Codreanu 1976, 217).

Two other adjacent concepts that surround the concept of Nation, and that come closer to the core in some permutations, are those of "race" and "empire". Even if it is possible to argue that all varieties of fascism are (even if only implicitly) racist at some level, not all of them make a direct use of the concept of "race". There are, nonetheless, cases in which the reference to some type of racial superiority is explicit, such as Quisling's, a Norwegian fascist who wrote that "the progress of our nation is inextricably bound up with the preservation of Nordic blood" (Griffin 1995, 209). Even the Romanian variety of fascism displayed by Codreanu, which had a very evident spiritual component, had the goal of creating a national community characterized by blood homogeneity. Some racist elements were also evident, for instance, in the Canadian party led by Adrien Arcand, whose program stated that "only the members of the two great races [French and British] that form, since its beginning, the population of Canada, can be Canadian citizens" (Arcand 1933, 12). However, the variant of fascism that most notoriously made use of racist conceptions was German National-Socialism, whose leader Adolf Hitler was known for his obsession with the purity of the "Arian" race.

In Hitler's worldview, "racial struggle" was the key to understand the evolution of history, since the fight for the survival of the Aryan race and its subjugation of other "inferior" races was the factor that explained the technological and cultural developments of civilization. According to him, there was a hierarchy of races, and at the top of it stood the Aryan race. As he wrote, "all that we admire in the world to-day, its science, its art, its technical developments and discoveries, are the products of the creative activities of a few peoples, and it may be true that their first beginnings must be attributed to one race [the Aryans]" (Hitler 1939, 225). Furthermore, Hitler was overwhelmingly obsessed with the supposed perils of racial miscegenation, stating that the mixture between stronger and weaker races was the reason that explained the decadence of the Aryan race.

---

[5] The quotes from *The Doctrine of Fascism* come from the following webpage: http://www.worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Germany/mussolini.htm. Since there are no indications of pages, in my quotes I include the title of the section from which they were taken, in order to help the reader.

As he said, the Aryan "submerged in the racial mixture and gradually lost his cultural creativeness" (Hitler 1939, 231). In the Nazi variant of fascism (as well as in others), it is thus possible to conclude that the concept of "race" is much closer to the core than in the generic pattern that we here present. That does not mean, however, that the concept of Nation is not important in those variants, but rather that, in them, the national community is defined in racial terms. Nevertheless, the insertion of racist conceptions in those permutations makes them acquire specific characteristics that affect not only the core concept of Nation, but also some of the core concepts that were not yet discussed.

Furthermore, it is important to mention the adjacent concept of "empire", which in some cases also came closer to the core and often represented the most materialistic dimension of the "historical mission" that was necessary for the Nation to achieve. As it is written in *The Doctrine of Fascism,* "Fascism sees in the imperialistic spirit -- i.e. in the tendency of nations to expand - a manifestation of their vitality". Furthermore, "peoples who rise or re-arise are imperialistic; renunciation is characteristic of dying peoples" (Mussolini 1932, "The Absolute Primacy of the State"). This quote seems to leave no doubt about the importance of territorial expansion to the Italian variant of fascism, but perhaps the permutation in which the concept of "Empire" played the most relevant role was the German one. As it is known, to Adolf Hitler, the conquering of "vital space" in Eastern Europe was a fundamental goal in order to guarantee the survival of the Aryan race in the fight against his enemies, and it was also conceived as a mission destined to rejuvenate the Germans and strengthen their will to combat and defeat the Jews. Nevertheless, these imperial notions are more difficult to assess in other varieties of fascism, such as Primo de Rivera's, about which one cannot state with certainty whether the will to empire would include the conquering of new territory or just the spiritual guidance of other Nations (namely in the territories of South America that once belonged to the Spanish Empire).[6]

Interestingly enough, such spiritual guidance would also be in line with the core goals of "generic fascism", since in *The Doctrine of Fascism* it is said that "an imperial nation, that is to say a nation which directly or indirectly is a leader of others, can exist without the need of conquering a single square mile of territory" (Mussolini 1932, "The Absolute Primacy of the State"). This quote thus implies that the imperialist notions of fascism did not need to include the actual annexation of new land, but rather some type of change in the relations between the Nation and other countries

---

[6] The actual goals of the Falangist leader when it came to imperialistic ambitions are rather difficult to assess, and it has sometimes been assumed that he wanted nothing more than to conquer a position of spiritual guidance in the area of the globe that in the past was ruled by Spain. However, Joan Maria Thomàs (2019) has a different perspective, arguing that the annexation of new territory was a primordial goal to Primo de Rivera. His book is worth reading.

in order to guarantee a position of prominence in the international arena. It is as if the imperialistic mentality in fascism could sometimes be more related to some type of spiritual superiority that legitimized the capacity to lead and guide other countries than to invade and conquer them by military intervention. Besides, it is also important to note that, in some permutations of fascism that emerged in countries which possessed an empire, the main goal usually was that of valorizing the territory already conquered, rather than that of acquiring new portions of land. That was the case of the Portuguese fascist Francisco Rolão Preto, and also that of Oswald Mosley, who gave the utmost importance to the necessity of keeping India in the British Empire.

After the Nation, we must refer the core concept of **State**, which is considered by Michael Mann as a definitional element of fascism. As stated by this author, "fascists worshiped state power", since the State would be able to "solve crises and bring about social, economic, and moral development" (Mann 2004, 21). The most evident praise of the power of the State is once again found in the text of the *Doctrine of Fascism*, in which it is explicitly said that "The Fascist conception of the State is all embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value" (Mussolini 1932, "Rejection of Individualism and the Importance of the State"). Thus, in the Italian variant of Fascism, the State was seen as an entity whose powers should know no boundaries and which should encompass all aspects of life in society. Furthermore, in the same text, it is stated that it is the State that creates the nation, rather than the opposite, since only the State can confer "volition and therefore real life" to the national community, thus giving it the right to exist. In Italian Fascism, the State represents not only the consciousness, but also the will to power and to action of the national community. Without it, the nation cannot exist.

However, it is worth noticing that the Italian variant of fascism attributed a prominence to this concept that might not be shared by other permutations. Nonetheless, it is possible to argue that this concept remains a core element of fascism for, even in other permutations, the State was seen as an instrument that was necessary in order to coordinate and guide the social, political and economic life of the nation. For this reason, I consider the concept of State to be a core one in fascist ideology and affirm that it closely interlinks with the adjacent concept of "order", since its main goal was that of attaining a functioning community in which chaos ceases to be a permanent component. Such a view is expressed by the French fascist Georges Valois, when he says that "it is vital […] that [the State] is structured in such a way as to exercise control over this new world" (Griffin 1995, 198). Jacques Doriot even adds that a State that would be able to "reorganize France and the Empire" and would also "make France respected abroad" (Griffin 1995, 199). Thus, the State could also be seen by fascists as a necessary instrument for the nation to reconquer its grandeur. Not less importantly, Italian Fascist Syndicalist Edmondo Rossoni conceived the State

as the solution to the problems caused by the economic anarchy of liberalism. The Fascist State needed to know "not only what is being produced, but also the conditions in which it is produced", thus rendering possible the "practical collaboration of all the elements of society" (Griffin 1995, 77). The State could therefore organize all the productive forces of society and coordinate them in a way that the former liberal state was not able to do. Perhaps the best formulation is expressed by the French Marcel Déat, who compares the State to a gardener who has the duty of taking care of the flowers in such a way that makes it possible for life to develop in his garden (Déat 1998, 47).

However, the centrality of this concept in fascist ideology may seem less indisputable if we mention that some varieties apparently gave it a role that was only secondary. After all, it was Hitler himself who considered the State to be a less relevant feature of his worldview, having no utility in itself and only becoming important if submitted to the purpose of protecting the interests and well-being of the Aryan race. As said by the Nazi leader, "the fundamental principle is that the State is not an end in itself but the means to an end" (Hitler 1939, 305). That end is to "promote those nobler elements of our race and of the whole of mankind which have remained unimpaired" (Hitler 1939, 310). However, I insist on the centrality of this concept by arguing that, in one way or another, the necessity of using the State in order to achieve some goal was present in all varieties of fascism, even if, in some cases, this might not seem so evident as in the Italian permutation, or if the reasons to ask for a strengthening of State power and the extent of such a strengthening could vary depending on the variant that one talks about. In the end, what is important to retain is that the core goals of fascist ideology could not dispense the reinforcement of the State, independently of the aims that a particular fascism was trying to achieve. For this reason, my conceptual pattern of fascist ideology includes the State in its core, thus allowing for a distinction between fascism and other nationalist ideologies that do not call for a strong intervention of State apparatus in society.

The third core concept that must be mentioned is that of **Synthesis**.[7] The choice of such a word, which does not seem to evoke any political concept, might appear strange at first, but it becomes easier to understand it if one remembers that Mussolini once said that fascism was a "synthesis of all negations and all positives" (Bosworth 2014, 114). This concept thus refers, in a first dimension, to a way of thinking that was very common among fascists and which was characterized by a combination of different and even opposite worldviews that contributed to create a very syncretic ideological content. Such way of thinking was also noticeable, for instance,

---

[7] In my previous study, I had chosen to use the word "Conciliation" to express this idea, but I have come to the conclusion that "Synthesis" is the best one.

in British fascist Oswald Mosley, who constantly affirmed that fascism united ideas coming from both the left and the right in order to address the problems of modern society. However, much more than that, I argue that Synthesis can be considered as a concept in its own right because it refers to a principle that was at the core of the fascist worldview: that of uniting the opposites and create a new cohesive whole. The idea that fascism had to deal with the disorder and anguish of the present society and unite once again what had unfortunately been separated due to the corrosive influence of liberalism and socialism was a goal oftentimes expressed by fascist themselves. It is for this reason that French fascist Marcel Déat (1998, 47) asked for the construction of a "regime that reunites what has been kept separated".

It must be added that this concept of Synthesis is closely related to what Roger Eatwell calls "holism", that is, the tendency "to homogenize the nation, rather than celebrate diversity within it" (Eatwell 2003, xxiv). Likewise, this concept can also be compared to what is often called "organicism", that is, a conception of society "in which its various sectors are held to bear a structured relationship to each other that serves to define and delimit their roles and rights, taking precedence over the identities and rights of individuals" (Payne, 1995, 13). In the end, what is most important, it is to note that all these notions and concepts refer to the idea of creating a cohesive whole in which the elements that are part of it do not exist independently of each other but are linked and somehow working together. The reason why I choose the word Synthesis to refer to this component is because I believe that it is the one the best conveys the idea that fascism was all about uniting conflicting elements within the national community. To state that fascism is an ideology in which Synthesis plays a great role means saying that fascists could not stand what they saw as anarchic disorder and constantly sought the construction of a society in which such disorder would be transcended thanks to the creation of a cohesive unity.

One of the concepts that is present in the adjacency of Synthesis is that of "unity", which refers to the condition in which the conflicts have been solved. This concept is evident, for instance, in the *Doctrine of Fascism,* when it is said that Fascism aims at creating a system "in which divergent interests are coordinated and harmonized in the unity of the State" (Mussolini 1932, "Rejection of Individualism and the Importance of the State"). The specific tasks that the nation had to perform in order to achieve this "unity" might vary according to the different varieties of fascism and the concrete challenges that the national community had to face. For instance, the Spanish leader Primo de Rivera constantly argues against the perils of separatism in regions like Basque and Catalonia, which could endanger the survival of the nation. Nevertheless, two features that were common to all variants of fascism were the "conciliation between classes" and the "conciliation between the individual and the collectivity". The former relates to a primary goal

mentioned by all fascists, which is that of attracting the working class back to nationalism (taking it away from Marxist influences) and integrate it in a community in which both employers and workers could defend their interests insofar as they did not go against the needs of the nation. The unity between social classes was, therefore, a fundamental aspect of the goal of creating a more unified and homogeneous nation. This objective is expressed in the words of Elias Simojoki, a member of the Finish IKL, who expressed the desire of constructing a society in which "class hatred has been eradicated" (Griffin 1995, 214), as well as in those of Primo de Rivera (1940, 90), when the states that "workers are the blood and the soil of Spain, they are a part of us". In a similar vein, a document from the South-African *Ossewabrandwag* stated that in a movement like theirs "the entire nation is drawn together in an invincible unity and all differences of classes are wiped out" (Griffin 1995, 229). As to the "conciliation between the individual and the collectivity", this refers to the objective of transcending individualism and create a society in which the goals of the individual are not in opposition to the goals of the national state. This goal is evident in the words of Alexander Raven Thomson, who says that "there is no need for any conflict between individual and the state as neither can exist without the other". For this reason, the two of them must be conciliated in the "organic purpose of the state", in which "the individual can attain his highest potentiality" (Griffin 1995, 176).

In some permutations of fascism, which is the case of the Italian one, but not only, the concept of "corporatism" came closer to the core, since this seemed to represent the political and economic system which was the most suitable to attain the unity and cohesion that was so desired. "Corporatism" was thus a form of social organization that could harmonize and conduct the elements of the national community, representing, in the words of the British ideologue Alexander Raven Thomson, "the organic form through which the nation can find expression" (Griffin 1995, 176). This adjacent concept was particularly relevant in Italian Fascism and, at least for a time, it was the feature that was most admired by foreigner observers, some of whom tried to import some these notions to their own nations. It is thus not surprising that Ugo Spirito saw in "corporatism" the element that could bring an international dimension to fascist ideology, due to the influence that the Italian system had apparently had on other countries. According to him, "Fascism has understood that the true triumph of corporatism lies in bringing about the corporative idea throughout the whole world" (Griffin 1995, 69).

Next, it is important to mention the core concept of **Revolution**, which refers to the total transformation of society that fascists aimed to concretize. The importance of this concept has been recognized by many other researchers, including Stanley Payne (1995, 487), who stated that "fascism was the most revolutionary form of nationalism at that point in history". When fascists

talked about a Revolution, they usually meant the creation of a new era in which societies would be guided by new principles and that would allow the emergence of a new economic and political system. It was due to the belief in such a goal that Mussolini declared in the year of 1933 that "we have entered fully into a period which can be called the transition from one type of civilization to another" (Griffin 1995, 72). The Belgian fascist José Streel, in his turn, said that "we are witnessing the crystallization of what historians will call the century of fascism or national socialism, on a par with the great periods of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the *ancient régime*, and the liberal epoch" (Griffin 1995, 207). Perhaps the best formulation of this idea of creating a new civilization is found in the writings of the Brazilian Plínio Salgado, who believed that the world was about to enter an era in which a new humanity, or as he called it "a fourth humanity", would be created and would synthetize in it the best elements of all the previous eras of humanity.

The concept of Revolution interlinks with what I consider to be the adjacent concept of "Palingenesis", which, as it is known, was seen by Roger Griffin as a core feature of fascism. Thus, differently from Griffin, but in a manner that it is still close to his line of thinking, I prefer to consider the palingenetic notion of fascism as an adjacent component that helps to delimit the meaning of the core concept of Revolution, rather than a core concept in its own. In any case, it is important to notice that this palingenetic idea always refers to the necessity of a total "rebirth" of the national community, since this was the only solution to overcome the state of decadence that the nation supposedly faced. When reading fascist sources, it is frequent to encounter descriptions of what is a supposed state of weakness and decay, often attributed to causes like materialism and individualism. This is evident even in non-European fascists, like the Japanese Nakano Seigo, who once said that "our Japanese spirit has been weak" and, in order to surpass the current crisis, one should "write your own *Mein Kampf* on your own reality" (Griffin 1995, 241). The Belgian fascist Léon Degrelle expressed his contempt for the supposedly morally corrupt society he lived in by saying that "Europe is going mad. Mad with scandals. Mad with egoism. Mad with revolt against heaven. Mad with blood […] Corrupt in its morality, debased in its faith, puffed up with individualism" (Griffin 1995, 205).

Exactly what the national rebirth would represent could vary according to the variants of fascism but, in general, it signified the arrival of an era in which greatness and honor would be reconquered and would put an end to the material decadence that corrupted the community. Such a revolutionary transformation, however, did not preclude fascists from looking at the past and try to draw some inspiration from it. Quite the contrary, it was in past eras of supposed greatness that several fascists thought that their revolutionary rebirth should be based, in order to recreate the achievements of other epochs. That was the reason why British fascists like Mosley sough to draw

inspiration from the era of the Tudors, while Mussolini and Italian Fascists tried to imitate the glorious events of ancient Rome. Likewise, the Portuguese Francisco Rolão Preto believed that it was crucial to go back to the "slandered land of the Middle ages" in order to find the principles of economic traditionalism that should guide the construction of a new future (Preto 2015, 161). The Chilean Jorge González Von Marées expressed a similar idea when he said that, in order to fight the "prevailing materialism" and "save our country", people need to believe in a "national idea" that is "rooted in the noble traditions of the country's past" (Griffin 1995, 235). The Revolution that fascists wanted to carry out, therefore, encompassed both the earning for a new future and the will to let oneself be guided by principles coming from past ages.

Furthermore, it is important to notice that, at the core of the fascist Revolution, was the goal of creating what was seen as a "new man". This new type of man would be different from the one that exists in liberal societies and would reject individualistic and materialistic notions. It would be a man capable of recovering the strength and the virility that liberal societies had supposedly destroyed and, thus, be reinserted in the context of the national community and achieve all his creative potential as a member of the organic nation. The goal of creating this man was fundamental, for instance, in the Romanian variant of fascism, which gave it such great prominence that Corneliu Codreanu once said that "this country is dying of lack of men, not of lack of programs" (Codreanu 1976, 159). The French fascist Pierre Drieu La Rochelle also gave us a description of what he thought that this man should be. According to him, the "new man" should be "restoring to the soul and the body the values of force, of courage, of affirmation, eager to experience and to be tested and to base his life on an immediate and constant relationship between what is thought and what is achieved" (Griffin 1995, 202).

A very interesting formulation is also found in an obscure figure of German Nazism, E. Gunther Grundel, who said that the "new type of human being" would leave aside the individualism and materialism of the bourgeoisie and would "forge links with the healthy roots of western humanity", creating a synthesis of the ancient values of knights, the medieval Christians, the aristocracy and educated the middle classes (Griffin 1995, 128). Related to the cult of the "new man", one could also frequently find references to the cult of youth, since fascists believed that the younger years were the ones in which human beings are prone to heroic and idealistic actions in the name of the nation. Thus, the rebirth of the national community and the creation of a new type of man would necessarily include an important participation of the youth of the country. It was for this reason that the Portuguese Rolão Preto famously used the slogan "all power to the young". Likewise, the general secretary of the Italian Fascist Party Giovanni Giurati once said that "it is

among the youth that all the great movements in history have found their prophets, their soldiers, their martyrs" (Griffin 1995, 68).

At this point, a mention should be made to the ideological formulations during the phase of fascism as a movement. During that phase, when fascism does not have to make the concessions that the implementation of a regime typically renders necessary, the attitude of contestation towards the establishment allows for some radical conceptions of social transformation that may later become less preponderant. For this reason, some factions within fascist movements can display permutations in which the concept of Revolution is formulated as a radical alteration of the economic and political system that is meant to weaken or even destroy the capitalist system and reduce the material distinctions between social classes. In such cases, of which the "Strasserite" wing of the Nazi party and the syndicalist faction of the Italian movement are examples, concepts such as "social justice" can be closer to the core. That also happened, for instance, in the Falangist variety of fascism, because its leader, Primo de Rivera, repeatedly talked about satisfying the material needs of the people, and with Rolão Preto's National-Syndicalism, which was developed in a context of contestation against the conservative dictatorship of Salazar. Nevertheless, one must note that such radical notions do not mean that, even in those permutations, it is not possible to find the same ideas about the "new man" and all the other features that we described in the last paragraphs.

The fifth core concept to mention is that of **Authority**, which to fascists represented a principle that should be respected in every sphere of society and, for this reason, stands out as a fundamental element of this ideology. According to Stanley Payne (1995, 12), fascism had a "general tendency to exalt leadership, hierarchy, and subordination, so that all fascist movements came to espouse variants of a *Führerprinzip,* deferring to the creative function of leadership". In the fascist mentality, which had an extremely hierarchical view of society, one would always have to follow the principle of obedience towards the people who exercised Authority in the national community. In fact, the best fascist militants were deemed to be those who knew how to follow orders and did not question the will of their superiors. However, it is worth noticing that fascists themselves oftentimes stated that such principles of obedience and discipline did not represent a form of tyranny, for they said they preferred to foment a form of voluntary discipline, in which the militants gladly accepted to follow the indications that were given to them. This was evident, for instance, in the writings of the Irish fascist Eoin O'Duffy, who stated that he envisioned a "spirit of obedience which will lack rigidity. Voluntary discipline is better, and harder to break, than the discipline of the school master in the classroom or of the Sargent-Major on the Barrack Square"

(Griffin 1995, 183). Such formulations can be seen as attempts to disguise the crudest aspects of fascist ideology and present them as more palatable.

Furthermore, the first adjacent concept that it is possible to find in the vicinity of Authority is that of "elites", which referred to the group of prescient people who, because of their deeds and abilities, stood out from other people and conquered the right to guide them. One of the main fascist goals was, therefore, that of creating a new elite to replace the one that then existed. Perhaps the one who best described this feature was Corneliu Codreanu (1976, 214), who wrote about a process of "social selection" that would allow for the appearance of new elites capable of replacing the existing ones (who are responsible for the current state of decadence). In Primo de Rivera's texts, one also finds a very elitist conception of the fascist revolution, since the Spanish leader believed that only a small group of prescient people would have the capacity to transform society, while being suspicious of the irrationality of the masses. In the same vein, the German Otto Strasser (who belonged to a so-called "left-wing" of Nazism) once wrote that "this formation of a ruling cast, of an elite, is the vital issue posed by the new order" (Griffin 1995, 115).

In the vicinity of the concept of "elites", it is also possible to find the concept of "leader", which referred to the charismatic chief that embodied the aspirations of the national community and who should be adored and followed by the people. The necessity for such a leader was so naturally acknowledged by some fascists, that the Hungarian Ferenc Szálasi even referred to himself as the natural guide and constructer of a new nation. As he said, "the new Hungary has to be based on my personal prestige. Luckily, I am here" (Griffin 1995, 225). However, once again, it is possible to find in fascist discourse a great number of formulations that tended to disguise or deny the tyrannical nature of this leadership. It is the case of Oswald Mosley (1932, 21), who, even when using the word "dictatorship", affirms that the principle of obedience to the leader is naturally accepted by the militants of his movement and does not represent some form of tyranny, but rather a choice to which his followers adhered. Therefore, it is as if fascists always tried to present the cult of the "leader" as a principle with which the people agreed and full-heartedly accepted, without the need to involve repressive measures. Swedish fascist Sven Olov Lindholm also defended the idea that the members of the national community would gladly forget about democracy as long as they feel that the "leader" can take care of them. As he said, "if the people is certain that the leader performs his task maturely, that he understands them and takes care of their affairs […], then no one shall miss democracy" (Lindholm 1943, 18). Sometimes, fascists also tried to romanticize the figure of the leader, seeing in him a courageous and ascetic human being who gave up his own desires and comfortable life in order to guide the people. He could also be described as a benign person who sometimes accepted to hear the desires of the people, wishing to serve them as best as

he could, even if the final decisions that he took were based on his prescient wisdom and not on the will of the masses. Such a view was propagated, for instance, by Primo de Rivera (1940, 30), who saw the leader as an abnegated chief, since "leadership is the supreme burden, the one that obliges all sacrifices, including the loss of intimacy"

Lastly, I will include the concept of **Violence** as one of the core elements of the ideological pattern of fascism. As stated by Stanley Payne (1995, 11), the most "unique feature of the fascist relationship to violence was the theoretical evaluation by many fascist movements that violence possessed a certain positive and therapeutic value in and of itself" and that a certain amount of it "was necessary for the health of national society". However, in spite of this positive evaluation of violence, some fascist movements sometimes tried to reformulate their discourse and apparently rejected the use of violence for the sake of it, claiming to only recur to it in contexts of self-defense (something which could be easily proved to be false). Nonetheless, a careful reading of fascist sources leaves no doubts about the importance that this ideology gave to warlike notions and to the idea of struggle as a fundamental component of life. This is enough to justify the inclusion of this concept in the core configuration that I am presenting. Furthermore, I will argue that this core concept has a two-folded dimension in the context of this ideology. In the first dimension, it closely interlinks with the adjacent concept of "cleansing" and is seen as a necessary component of the national rebirth and as an instrument that needs to be used in order to purify the nation. In its second dimension, Violence refers to the very principle upon which fascists constructed their worldview and interlinks with concepts such as "vitalism" and "social Darwinism".

The concept of "cleansing", which was also used by Michael Mann, refers to the goal of purging the nation and purifying it from its supposed alien elements and from its enemies. It is worth noticing that the enemies which fascists aimed to purge could be both ethnic and political and that different varieties of fascism could give different levels of relevance to this concept of "cleansing", some of them being clearly more virulent than others. For instance, in the case of Romanian fascism, it is possible to see a variety that was patently prone to Violence. In the words of Corneliu Codreanu, one finds recurrent insults not only against the Jews that were supposedly colonizing Romania, but also against political enemies: the apparently corrupt political elite that Codreanu sees as "traitors" and which he deemed guilty for allowing the Jews to settle in Romania. In a particularly violent passage of his book, he goes as far as saying that "the Jews are our enemies and as such they hate, poison, and exterminate us. Romanian leaders who cross into their camp are worse than enemies: they are traitors". And he adds: "the first and fiercest punishment ought to fall first on the traitor, second on the enemy. If I had but one bullet and I were faced by both an enemy and a traitor, I would let the traitor have it" (Codreanu 1976, 92).

In the case of the Croatian Ustashe, led by Ante Pavelic, one finds an equally racist conception of the nation, but the Brazilian Integralists led by Plínio Salgado seemed not to demonize supposed enemies (political or ethnic) so intensely, even if one of its members, Gustavo Barroso, was known for his anti-Semitism. As to the Italian variant, most of the Violence that it initially employed was directed against political enemies like the socialists, rather than ethnic enemies. Nevertheless, even in its first stage of development and long before the emergence of Nazism, Italian Fascism already showed a propensity to demonize ethnic elements that supposedly did not belong to the nation, as was the case of the Slovenians. Nevertheless, the variant of fascism that became most famous for its violent potential was, unsurprisingly, German National Socialism. Its leader Adolf Hitler notoriously dehumanized Jews in the pages of his book *Mein Kampf*, comparing them to parasites and to a disease that had to be eradicated in order for the racial community to survive. Perhaps one of the most infamous examples of the fascist defense of "cleansing" practices is found in the speech that Heinrich Himmler gave in Poznan in 1943, when the genocide of the Jews was already taking place. In this speech, the leader of the SS explains why the task of making "this people disappear from the face of the earth" is so important to the Aryans and why it is necessary to guarantee that no single Jew survives (Griffin 1995, 162).

As to the second dimension of Violence, it refers to a principle upon which fascists built their worldview. In other words, fascists saw the world as an irremediably violent place in which it was necessary to struggle and only the strongest deserved to play relevant roles in society. Fascists did not see this as a negative element, but rather as an undeniable truth that should be accepted. Accordingly, fascism also seemed to see in Violence a creative potential that should be used in the creation of a new community. Such a view is reiterated in the *Doctrine of Fascism*, where it is said that this ideology "therefore discards pacifism as a cloak for cowardly supine renunciation in contradistinction to self-sacrifice". Besides, there was also a eulogy of war as an event that was capable of bringing up the human potential for heroic deeds: "War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those peoples who have the courage to face it" (Mussolini 1932, "Rejection of Pacifism"). Similar views about war were displayed by Roberto Farinacci, who said that "the war also revealed the magnanimous spirit, the *élan* and the fraternal hearts of our reserve officers who had learned to fight by fighting" (Griffin 1995, 33). Some years later, during World War II, Joseph Goebbels would also eulogize the positive aspects of the conflict by saying that "every birth brings pain. But amid the pain there is already the joy of a new life". And he added: "the significance of the war has grown as its scale has increased. It is relentlessly at work, shattering old forms and ideas, and directing the eyes of human beings to new, greater objectives" (Griffin 1995, 159).

The two concepts that must therefore be mentioned in this context are those of "vitalism" and "social Darwinism". The former refers to the vision that society must be permeated by an energy and a will to act that, at least in the case of fascism, is clearly linked with the idea of constantly fighting for survival and with the will to power. As said in the *Doctrine of Fascism*, "a doctrine must therefore be a vital act and not a verbal display. Hence the pragmatic strain in Fascism, it's will to power, its will to live, its attitude toward violence, and its value" (Mussolini 1932, "The Fascist Totalitarian Vision of the Future"). Such vitalistic notions also interlink with the praise for heroes, martyrs and the ones who distinguish themselves through their deeds (this is also related to the fascist notion about the creation of new revolutionary elites). This cult of heroic deeds was a crucial component of fascism and it helps to understand why so many movements invested so much in worshiping those that they believed to be of a higher value. Lastly, the concept of "Social Darwinism" refers to the idea that only the strongest deserve to survive and achieve a relevant place in society. Such a view was taken to its most extreme consequences in the context of Nazi ideology, since Hitler saw the fight for survival as something that was rooted in nature itself and was even discernable in the relations between animals. In a passage of his book, he goes as far as saying: "he who would live must fight. He who does not wish to fight in this world, where permanent struggle is the law of life, has not the right to exist" (Hitler 1939, 225).

The Interlinkages between Core and Adjacent Concepts

Having said all this, before proceeding we must point out the main interlinkages of the conceptual pattern that we have described and its unique features. As it has already been pointed out, all the concepts of a given pattern are somehow interrelated and the fascist one is no exception. Not only do core concepts interlink between each other and give a specific meaning to the pattern as whole, but also adjacent concepts do so, sometimes contributing to alter the meaning of every core concept, and not just the ones in which vicinity their presence is more evident. Thus, the concepts of Nation, State, Synthesis, Revolution and Authority and Violence, as well as the ones in their adjacency, do not stand alone in fascist ideology. They rather unite in order to make fascism something unique and different from other ideologies.

The first recurrent interlinkage that it is important to notice is the one that brings the concepts of Nation and Revolution close to each other. Thanks to it, the scope of the fascist revolution is delimited and clearly conceived as a transformation that must be made in the national community. The fascist Revolution is always based on the Nation and, therefore, it is different from other revolutionary projects which may start from other assumptions and use different concepts (for instance, a revolution based on the concept of "social class"). Such a nationalist

Revolution has thus the aim of rejuvenating the Nation, saving it from decadence and restoring its greatness, that way making it possible to achieve the "historical mission" to which the Nation is destined. Besides, the interlinkage between the concept of Synthesis and Revolution means that the goals of such a Revolution include the idea of creating a new cohesive community. The aim of the Revolution is that of radically changing the conditions of a supposedly decaying society and unite in a new whole the elements within the Nation that until then have been kept separated. The interlinkage between Synthesis and the adjacent concept of "new man" (that we placed in the vicinity of Revolution) shows us that this new type of human being also refers to a man that is reinserted in the national community and becomes a part of its unity. The "new man" of fascist ideology is thus a man which represents the synthesis of opposites and is reconciled with the Nation and the State (with this, we can see that the concept of State and Revolution also interlink, and that the former should be an important instrument to perform the radical transformations envisioned by fascists).

Furthermore, it is important to note another recurrent interlinkage, the one that brings together the concepts of Nation, State and Synthesis. Thanks to this proximity, fascists conceive the Nation as a "Nation-Synthesis", a national community in which there are no internal divisions, and the State is seen as the instrument that renders such a Synthesis possible, for its function is that of orderly coordinating the different elements within the Nation. As to the concept of Authority, apart from interlinking with the State (for this is an instrument that is used to maintain order in society), it very interestingly also interlinks with the concept of Revolution, mostly due to the adjacent concept of "elites". This means that the fascist Revolution, with its goal of rejuvenating the Nation, intends to create new revolutionary elites that replace the existing decadent ones. It is due to this interlinkage that the concept of Authority gains very specific characteristics in this ideological pattern: fascists did not just want to perpetuate the power of the elites who traditionally hold important roles in society, but rather to bring new elites to power, that way distinguishing themselves from other authoritarian ideologies.

Lastly, we must mention the concept of Violence, which interlinks with Authority, mainly because the fascist "elites" are the ones who are prone to martial deeds, thus being possible to find the adjacent concept of "vitalism" also in the vicinity of Authority. These new "elites" would therefore be the heroes whose will to power had placed them in a position in which they could rule the Nation and replace the old elites. However, perhaps the most important feature when it comes to Violence is its interlinkage with Revolution and Nation, which happens thanks to the adjacent concept of "cleansing". This interlinkage helps to explain why fascism could surpass any other political phenomenon when it came to violent deeds: such violent methods were necessary for the

creation of a rejuvenated and homogenous national community, freed from the supposedly harmful influence of the elements that had apparently led the nation to a state of decadence. Since it puts a great deal of emphasis in the goal of carrying out a "palingenetic" Revolution, and it is willing to use all type of means to achieve it, fascism and Violence are always associated with each other.

Marginal Concepts

In the fascist conceptual pattern, the concept of "Liberty" clearly plays a very marginal role, and it is the one that must first come to mind when one talks about marginal concepts in fascism. Unlike ideologies such as liberalism, fascists do not attribute great importance to the notion of human individual freedom, clearly submitting it to the interests of the national community. Besides, even in the cases in which fascists do refer the concept of "Liberty" they seem to understand it in a way that is totally different from the one used in rival ideologies: according to those fascists, "real" freedom is the one that can be attained in the context of the national community and can only be exercised by the "new man" that is inserted in the social groups to which he belongs. This secondary role is noticeable, for instance, in Oswald Mosley, when he rejects the idea that freedom can exist in a liberal society, stating that only after the corporate state had solved the problems of Britain would it be possible to have the material conditions to enjoy a certain amount of "Liberty". In this context, the variant of fascism espoused by the Australian Eric Campbell may seem atypical, since this leader appeared to highly value individualistic principles and personal freedom even referring to himself as a "confirmed individualist that I am". However, even in his case, "Liberty" is conceived as something different from liberal ideology and is seen as a characteristic that is always related to discipline and Authority. As he says, "discipline is essential in the cause of freedom" (Campbell 1934, 25), thus showing that he too gave a unique meaning to this concept.

Permeability and Rejections

In this section, we shall briefly expose the features that fascism shared with other ideologies, as well as the elements of its competitors to which fascism was opposed, always paying attention to the concepts that were at the basis of permeability and rejections. The case of socialism is rather interesting, because it is the ideology that has less similarities with fascism. Fascists rejected socialism due to the notion of "class struggle", which is seen in fascism as one of the causes of national decadence, and to which they opposed the concept of "class conciliation". Furthermore, fascists, due to the importance that they gave to the core concept of Nation, totally rejected the concept of "internationalism" that is at the core of socialist ideas. Nevertheless, some varieties like

Falangism and Portuguese National Syndicalism do seem to value the concept of "social justice", which may bring them closer to some non-Marxist varieties of socialism.

As to liberalism, fascists rejected it due to the concept of "individualism", which they saw as a symptom of decadence (even when fascists made use of individualistic notions, they decontested this concept in a very different way), as well as due to the importance that liberals give to parliamentarianism and democratic institutions. In any case, liberalism shares a very vague connection to fascism when it comes to the concept of "social mobility". Although in a different way, fascists, just like liberals, wanted to create a national community in which there would be conditions for individual effort to allow for the social ascension of those who deserved it (in the case of fascism, this would refer to then new "heroes"). Finally, conservatism is the ideology that shares the most similarities with fascism, including (in some variants of conservatism) the concept of Nation, as well as the concepts of "order" and Authority. Conservatives, just like fascists, reject what they see as anarchic disorder and firmly state that society must be governed by authoritarian principles or, at least, be characterized by the respect for "order". However, the two ideologies appear as clearly distinct when one analyzes the specific features of the concept of Authority in fascism, as well as it is used of the concept of Revolution. It is the distinct conception about the creation of new "elites" and its praise of "vitalism" that separates fascism from conservatism. Thus, fascists tended to reject conservative ideologies for they saw them as too passive and incapable of changing society.

Internal Contradictions

Lastly, I intend to briefly describe the main contradictions of fascist ideology and the way how they are solved. The first contradiction worth mentioning is the one that opposes the *Individual* to the *Collectivity*. This contradiction takes place because, while rejecting individualism and putting emphasis in the national community as a whole, fascists do seem to value and eulogize individual heroic acts which have a great value for the regeneration of the Nation. This contradiction is solved due to the concept of "Personality", which is seen as something different from the liberal individual, and refers to the person that acts individually but always in the context of the national community and with the goal of contributing to the happiness of the Nation. "Personality" is, therefore, the man who is reinserted in the community in which he belongs and ceases to be the individual of liberal ideology to become a new type of human being. For instance, Hitler refers to this concept to refer to the best men of the Aryan race, the ones who are capable of leading their subordinates through the struggle. Likewise, Primo de Rivera constantly mentions the "person" to

indicate a type of human being that acquires his unique characteristics thanks to the relationship with other elements of the community to which he belongs.

Apart from this, there is also the contradiction that opposes *Order* to *Revolution*. If, on the one hand, fascists seem to be prone to radically change society and its foundations, on the other hand, the concept of "order" seems not only to restrain the scope of such transformations, but also cause some tensions in this ideology. This contradiction, so we argue, is never totally solved and it represents one of the most important ambiguities of fascism. It stems from the fascist tendency to aim at creating a new future, while not completely rejecting traditional notions coming from other eras and trying to preserve some characteristics of the past. Nevertheless, some fascists did resort to some reasoning in order to try to minimize this contradiction. Thus, when defending the use of Violence, fascists usually state that they respect "order" as a foundational principle of society and claim that their Revolution would be carried out while respecting such principle, for they distinguish their type of Revolution from the one that is intended by their rivals on the left. Fascists could, therefore, present themselves as revolutionaries who did not intend to bring anarchy and destruction to society, contrary to what leftists supposedly wanted, and who only employed some form of organized Violence. This is a line of reasoning that it is possible to find, for instance, in the texts by Oswald Mosley, when he writes that the fascist Revolution would respect the authority of the British crown.

However, the most important contradiction in fascism is perhaps the one that opposes *Populism* to *Elitism*. This contradiction is created due to a tension between the fascist propensity to fiercely endorse elitist principles and downplay the capacity of the broader masses to emancipate themselves, and the tendency to see the "people" as an entity with a unique force that would play an important role in the regeneration of the Nation. It is as if, in fascism, the elitist contempt for the people coexisted with some level of admiration for the strength of that same people. Besides, in many fascist texts, there is the notion that the leaders and the people somehow need each other. The leader would guide the people and educate them, but that same leader would achieve nothing without the people and its valuable elements. Such a conception is noticeable, for instance, when Primo de Rivera (1940, 53) talks about a "hopeful mass of people, prone to be molded by its best elements". This contradiction is at the core of fascist ideology and is never totally solved, thus leading to the coexistence of elitist and populist elements in it (even if the former are clearly more prominent).

Conclusions

What I tried to present in the pages of this essay was a conceptual pattern composed by six core concepts, several adjacent concepts, as well as other important features. Such concepts do not exist apart from each other in the context of fascist ideology, for they interlink and create a specific meaning thanks to the proximity between them. All these concepts must therefore be analyzed together and be understood as a part of a coherent ideological rearrangement in which every element is somehow related to the others. In order to allow for a better understanding of the conceptual pattern that I have just presented, the following table summarizes the main features that were discussed in the last sections of this essay:

Core Concept	Adjacent Concept
Nation	Mission, Race, Empire
State	Order
Synthesis	Unity, Corporatism
Revolution	Palingenesis, New Man, Cult of Youth
Authority	Elites, Leader
Violence	Cleansing, Vitalism, Social Darwinism
Marginal Concept: Liberty	
Permeability of Fascism: Permeability with socialism: concept of "social justice"; Permeability with liberalism: concept of "social mobility"; permeability with conservatism: concept of "order" and Authority	
Fascist Rejections: Rejection of socialism: based on the concepts of "class struggle" and "internationalism"; Rejection of liberalism: based on the concept of "individualism"; rejection of conservatism: based on the absence of the concept of Revolution in conservatism	
Internal Contradictions: Individual/Collectivity; Order/Revolution; People/Elites	

Table 1- The Main elements of the Conceptual Configuration of Fascist Ideology

It is based on this table and on the concepts that are part of it that I can finally present the definition of fascism that I was looking for in the beginning of this essay. Such a definition has the merit of including more core features than other previous attempts, but still being concise enough to be summarized in just one sentence. The definition is mainly based on the core concepts, but that does not mean that it is not important to know in more detail the adjacent concepts and the other features of the fascist pattern (that's why those features were presented here). Thus, the phrase that I will use to define fascism is the following:

> Fascism is a Nationalist ideology that aims at strengthening the power of the State, Synthetizing the elements of the national community into a new cohesive unity, performing a Revolution to rejuvenate the nation, and affirming the importance of the principle of Authority, while positively evaluating the role of Violence in society.

If any student of fascism finds this definition to be a useful one, I can gladly conclude that my work has successfully fulfilled its purpose.

Bibliographic references

Arcand, Adrien. *Programme et Reglements du Parti National Social Chrétien*. Montreal: Parti National Social Chrétien, 1933.

Bosworth, Richard. *Mussolini*. London: Bloomsburry, 2014.

Campbell, Eric. *The New Road*. Sidney: Briton Publications Limited, 1934.

Codreanu, Corneliu. *For My Legionaries*. Madrid: Libertatea, 1976.

Déat, Marcel. "Le Partie Unique". Em *Documents Pour L'Histoire*. Vol. I. Org. Philippe Randa. Paris: Éditions Déterma, 1998.

Dobry, Michel. "Desperately Seeking 'Generic Fascism': Some Discordant Thoughts on the Academic Recycling of Indigenous Categories". Em *Rethinking the Nature of Fascism: Comparative Perspectives*, org. António Costa Pinto, 53-84. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230295001_3

Eatwell, Roger. *Fascism: A History*. London: Pimlico, 2003.

Freeden, Michael. *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Garau, Salvatore. *Fascism and Ideology: Italy, Britany and Norway*. London: Routledge, 2015. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315849300

Griffin, Roger. *Fascism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Griffin, Roger. "The Palingenetic Core of Generic Fascist Ideology". Em *Che Cos'è Il Fascismo? Interpretazioni e Prospettive Di Ricerche*, org. Alessandro Campi, 97-122. Roma: Ideazione, 2003.

Griffin, Roger. *The Nature of Fascism*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315003627

Hitler, Adolf. *My Struggle*. London: Hurst & Blackett, 1939.

Lindholm, Sven Olof. *Svensk FRihetskamp*. 1943.

Mann, Michael. *Fascists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Martins, Carlos Manuel. *From Hitler to Codreanu: The Ideology of Fascist Leaders*. London: Routledge, 2019. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003106043

Mosley, Oswlad. *The Greater Britain*. London: BUF, 1932.

Mussolini, Benito. "The Doctrine of Fascism". 1932. Acedido a 11 de Agodsto de 2022. http://www.worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Germany/mussolini.htm

Payne, Stanley. *A History of Fascism: 1914-1945*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

Preto, Francisco Rolão. "Para Além do Comunismo". Em *Obras Completas*, org. José Melo Alexandrino, 161-212. Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2015.

Primo de Rivera, José Antonio. *Anthology*. Madrid: Ediciones FE, 1940.

Primo de Rivera, José Antonio. *Antologia en Español*. Madrid: Ediciones Prensa del Movimiento, 1950.

Saz, Ismael, Zira Box, Toni Morant, e Julián Sanz. "Introduction". Em *Reactionary Nationalists, Fascists and Dictatorships in the Twentieth Century: Against Democracy*, org. Ismael Saz, Zira Box, Toni Morant, e Julián Sanz. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22411-0

Thomàs, Joan Maria. *José Antonio Primo de Rivera: The Reality and the Myth of a Spanish Fascist Leader*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv287sjss

***