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Fatalistic normalisation, daunted managerialism and afflictive condemnation as forms of slow violence

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Slow violence is an analytical concept that reveals the unseen and unrecognised forms of violence that accumulate over time and space, leading to devastating environmental and social consequences. This paper argues that slow violence involves discursive practices that render violence-producing mechanisms and processes invisible, concealed, and mis-recognised and ensure the continuance of violent systems by hindering cognitive and emotional awareness of the links between different forms of violence and social harms, and thus, any potential resistance against them. These discursive practices are identified as fatalistic normalisation, daunted managerialism, and afflictive condemnation, all of which operate in tandem to veil the links between different forms of violence and social harm. The paper provides an operational framework of slow violence to help unveil these links and pave the way towards cognitive and emotional awareness for radical social transformation.

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Introduction

The concept of slow violence, introduced by Nixon (2013), not only allows us to understand different forms of violence in relation to each other but also shows us how we can look at the concept of violence from a different angle and question our everyday, ordinary life experiences of violence. Slow violence refers to violence that is out of sight, and its effects span across time and space, often not even perceived as violence. It also suggests a gradual culmination of such dispersed forms of unrecognised violence leading up to and remaining invisible until the emergence of their more dramatic social and environmental consequences. It is a useful analytical concept that enables us to pursue, grasp and analyse otherwise unseen, unrecognised forms of environmental and social harm. We argue that slow violence differs from adjacent concepts such as structural violence (Galtung, 1969) or systemic violence (Zizek, 2008), as it does not define predetermined, static and external systems that continually reproduce violence and harm in repetition but rather captures the everchanging, kaleidoscopical and thus hard-to-recognise instances of violence perpetrated by various real actors in spatially and temporally dispersed ways.

Considering its unique perspective and usefulness as an analytical concept, slow violence gained scholarly attention in diverse disciplines, including but not limited to geography, environmental studies, sociology, criminology and psychology, and has been utilised to reveal various social and environmental injustices. In such studies, slow violence is used to reveal and define temporally and spatially dispersed harms by explicating the relationships between seemingly unrelated everyday acts of violence that are often minute and not even perceived as violence. These studies mostly bring together empirical data from wide-ranging sources to grasp the issue from varying angles in an attempt to capture the complexity and dynamics of spatially dispersed, temporally transforming relations. Different from such studies, this paper puts forward slow violence as what makes violence and social and environmental harms unseen and unrecognised until, during, and even after their devastating consequences occur. We argue that varying discourses of explanation, justification, excuse and response are at play in the concealment of the relations between various forms of everyday violence, the culmination of which erupts in devastating environmental and social harms. We identify these discursive practices as fatalistic normalisation, daunted managerialism, and afflictive condemnation and illustrate how they constitute different aspects of slow violence.

Slow violence as an analytical concept

Slow violence refers to "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (Nixon, 2013, p. 2). This concept describes incrementally damaging effects that are not adequately covered in conventional media and political discourse (Rice, 2016). This violence does not immediately manifest its erosive nature; its effects are only noticed when we look back after a certain period of time. It refers to violence that accumulates over time, goes unnoticed or is condoned and eventually turns disastrous. Although landslides, fires and floods are regarded as natural disasters at first glance, when the dimensions and effects of these disasters are considered, it is possible to find traces of human-induced abuse, neglect and irresponsibility over time (Raju et al. 2022). The concept of slow violence can be used to describe an irreparable act of violence committed by humans against the environment in which they and non-human beings inhabit.

When developing the concept of slow violence, Nixon benefits from the concept of *structural violence* (Galtung, 1969) as an

obstacle to the satisfaction of basic human needs and the development of one's own capacity. In structural violence, the concept of violence extends beyond direct acts of violence that occur between individuals and have immediate consequences. The term refers to ordinary consequences that occur during the routine functioning of the existing social structure. Structural violence manifests itself in various forms of discrimination institutionalised within society, such as capitalist exploitation, sexism and racism. Slow violence also evokes a similar concept that explicates diffuse yet implicit forms of violence, namely *systemic violence* (Zizek, 2008). *Systemic violence* Žižek (2008) puts forward is very similar to structural violence in broad outlines; however, systemic violence is inherently linked to global capitalism and the socio-material conditions it generates. Global capitalism is characterised by the almost automatic creation of social exclusion in ways which continue to create redundant populations and discard them, and simultaneously require different levels and ways of participation (including critique) that sustain the system as-is (Zizek, 2008). Despite sharing similar ground with these two concepts, we believe slow violence corresponds to a more dynamic and relational mechanism of violence, in which the relationships between the positions within the structure are far from fixed and predictable. Similarly, the qualities that define violence metamorphose, drawing on the temporal and spatial course. In terms of its effects and dimensions, we see that violence does not always occur in the same way. Since the coining of the term, slow violence is utilised as an analytical concept to make various forms of injustice visible in literature, for example, to examine settler colonialism as slow eco-social violence (Makey et al. 2022), the intertwined relations between violence, domination and care practices for non-human actors (Holmberg, 2021), the effects of the reach and constant presence of digital social technologies as a form of violence (Brydolf-Horwitz, 2018), policies and procedures pertaining to the existing situations and prospects of asylum seekers (Mayblin, 2019), inherently exclusionary and discriminatory practices of contemporary security regimes (Kramer and Remster, 2022) and so on. In line with these studies, we examine slow violence as different from overt coercion and suppression, which are mostly associated with more explicit and conspicuous forms of violence, but rather as the *conduct of conduct* (Foucault, 2007) through the shaping of individual behaviour and subjectivity, which require a certain degree of embodiment, participation, agency and engagement in both production of and maintaining violent and harmful situations. Through the introduction of a set of empowering techniques (e.g., autonomy and self-realisation), *the conduct of conduct* ensures individuals act on themselves while internalising power relations (Han, 2017). It is important to recognise that this perspective extends beyond a definition of a static, predetermined, external, structural mechanism and its forces as violent, as it allows us to recognise the active or passive roles played by various actors within different modes of engagement and/or disengagement in such violent mechanisms and processes, by bringing forward concepts of culpability and social responsibility among these actors.

Accordingly, slow violence is also about how the effects of violence are experienced, perceived and defined. We argue that slow violence is the operation of violence that is precisely in place in order to render violence-producing mechanisms and processes invisible, concealed and misrecognised. From this point of view, slow violence is more than a definition that covers the different types of violence and their effects that persist steadily within the social structure; it is a violent mechanism that produces the situations of not seeing, not realising, being indifferent, accepting, tolerating, and making do that keep the social structure with all

its violence and harms intact. It veils the dynamic relations among varying forms of violence and social harm, hinders the acquisition of cognitive and emotional awareness about their presence and impact, and as a result, prevents the development of effective and comprehensive ways of challenging and eliminating them. In this paper, we introduce three distinct yet interrelated mechanisms of slow violence that operate as such, namely *fatalistic normalisation, daunted managerialism*, and *afflictive condemnation*, that can help identify and reveal the links between various forms of violence under the concept of slow violence for future studies.

Fatalistic normalisation as slow violence

Similar to the way Bourdieu puts forward the concept of *symbolic violence* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) with its characteristics of misrecognition and naturalisation to explicate the effects of symbolic power, we are utilising it to explicate the taken-for-granted nature of slow violence by just resigning to it or denying its existence. Bourdieu emphasises that the oppressed groups, mostly implicitly, internalise their conditions as normal, inevitable or necessary by misrecognising the true extent of inequalities and injustices they experience (Swartz, 2013). However, misrecognition is actually at play for both the subordinated and the dominant, involving complicity, internalisation and embodiment, yet in different ways. This non-physical form of violence emerges in the power relations of different social agents as *internalised oppression*, taking the forms of resignation and learned helplessness, embedded in the explanations to justify ongoing social and environmental harms, human suffering, exploitation, unfair discrimination, and social exclusion. It also emerges in the form of *internalised domination*, when the harms are either denied or misrecognised while perpetrators are not held accountable since they remain hidden, or their harms are justified in self-righteous, entitled manners (Tappan, 2006). The former mystifies the agents responsible for the harms, and the latter indicates the entitlement to harm others claimed by the dominant groups through endorsing their superiority and prioritising their own interests as part of the natural social order or for the betterment of society as a whole. The phenomenon is often manifested through societal biases in norms, such as racialised and gendered social order, regulations, laws, social policies and institutionalisation (e.g., education system), as a consequence of groups possessing greater social power imposing their norms on subordinate groups (Swartz, 2013). Bourdieu does not explicate symbolic violence only through the social suffering of subordinated groups but also through its mechanisms of misrecognised obedience legitimising and even concealing the interests of dominator groups through symbolic power to reduce the possibility for resistance against such violence (Swartz, 2013).

In this paper, we refer to the operation of symbolic violence that depicts the social suffering of subordinated groups as unavoidable, even necessary, but also seemingly impossible to resist as *fatalistic normalisation*. In explaining social harms, *fatalistic normalisation* works in varying directions, diverting the attention from a larger, relational and complex understanding of social phenomena that cause violence and harm toward either more simplistic and banal explanations (e.g., nature, destiny, God-given order and a necessary evil for societal good), the natural order of life where certain subordinate groups are left to—or let to—be vulnerable, inferior, exploitable and disposable, or odd cases of individuals who individually are not capable to adapt and survive in the existing social order. Even if these explanations are seemingly rooted in ideologically distinct origins, their operation and impacts are similar. Such explanations not only conceal the perpetrators of violence and harm but also hinder any further

enquiry into it through the active production of ignorance (Lawrence, 2021). In the aftermath of the devastating Kahramanmaraş earthquakes on the 6th of February 2023 that killed more than 50,000 citizens, the rhetoric of the governing political party in Turkey demonstrated such fatalistic normalisation by evoking religion and nationalism. The president identified the citizens of Turkey as 'mütevekkil' (i.e., resigned to God) (Anadolu Agency, 2023) in an attempt to explicate their victimisation from earthquakes as inevitable and destined. Furthermore, the officials of the ruling party exalted the dead by referring to them as 'martyrs' rather than victims and exalted their victimisation as a 'test of their faith' rather than their suffering. In this way, getting killed during the earthquakes due to the misconduct of government officials transforms into *fatalistic normalisation* that is depicted, to some extent, as necessary for peace in the afterlife.

Similar explanations for environmental harms, by externalising the responsibility to natural or abstract forces rather than acknowledging the human agency and accountability involved in their production, can be observed in the climate change discourse. Climate change has become a dominant framework for understanding and communicating about various environmental disasters, such as hurricanes, floods and fires. However, the discourse of climate change is not monolithic or homogeneous; rather, it is contested and shaped by different actors with different interests and agendas. On the one hand, there are actors who deny the existence or the effects of climate change, such as some executives, politicians and segments of society who benefit from the status quo of fossil fuel consumption and economic growth (De Pryck and Gemenne, 2017). On the other hand, there are actors who acknowledge the reality and the urgency of climate change but fail to address its underlying causes or its uneven impacts, such as some news media organisations that report on 'natural' disasters without mentioning the role of everyday human activities (e.g., normalised collective reliance on petrochemical products) or their more devastating impacts on vulnerable, marginalised communities (Raju et al. 2022). In both cases, climate change, as a problem that occurs on a global scale and which many actors are involved in the formation of, is either dismissed or depoliticised, resulting in a lack of accountability and action for addressing the environmental harms that it entails. Accordingly, we are witnessing that the phenomenon of climate change has turned into a nifty excuse to hide those responsible for environmental disasters at the global, national, local, and individual levels (Lahsen et al. 2020). In cases where there are numerous perpetrators, identifying them one by one and holding them accountable becomes impossible. Therefore, we find ourselves in a situation where these disasters, which are increasing in frequency and severity under human influence, are accepted as the 'new normal' of society.

As well as describing the damage done to the environment, slow violence is a term that refers to the violence we are constantly exposed to and have to contend with in our social lives. The violence in question here is one that is often not defined as violence and is taken for granted in the ordinary course of daily life. It is not only the victims of violence failing to name it or resigning to it but also the society in general that contributes to slow violence by ignoring its effects, making it invisible, not caring, and condoning violence as a kind of necessity—as in the literal, interpretative or implicatory states of denial (Cohen, 2013). Davies (2022) questions who is responsible for the isolation and discreetness of slow violence and identifies the dominant perspective that holds the power to determine what violence is and is not. There are almost always groups of people who experience the effects of the spread and accumulation of violence over time directly and in the most dramatic ways, and violence has a devastating effect directly penetrating into their life

experiences. Meanwhile, the rest of the world largely ignores or denies this situation when someone else anywhere in the world suffers from such violence (Davies, 2022). The reason why any form of violence is not noticed by us may not be because, in reality, the effects of violence are too weak/slow to be felt, but because we are too far away to see/feel these effects, that is, we are in an advantageous position in the face of the reality of violence. Chronic infrastructural problems in the living environment, increasing air and water pollution, poor or inadequate nutrition, insufficient hygienic conditions of the living environment, densely populated/crowded households, the prevalence of violence and crime, and obstacles to accessing social services can be shown as examples of the struggles in daily life. Places where toxic wastes accumulate, where people and animals do not have access to clean drinking water, where natural habitats are plundered, where natural resources are exploited, and where famine, war, conflict, or various natural or human disasters happen, are the geographies where slow violence can be observed in its most dramatic form (Nixon, 2013). In such cases, environmental and social injustices coexist and feed off each other. Accordingly, slow violence is not only a concept limited to the effects of violence over time but also includes the uneven spatial and geographical distribution of violence and its consequences, as well as the denial of such violence and harm. Similarly, the problems of increasing inequality in income distribution, labour exploitation, precarious and poor working conditions (including workplace bullying), chronic unemployment, and the burden and destruction created by the disintegration of the welfare state within the neoliberal order (Lorey, 2015) are signs of slow violence hidden in the pace of daily life itself. In particular, we witness that the disintegration of the welfare state and the shift of the responsibility of care mostly to women create restrictive and obstructive effects on women's life choices and capabilities and that the imposed gender roles increase the social, emotional and economic pressure on women. While such a responsibility falls on women's shoulders, the imposition of the responsibility of care as a kind of 'womanly duty' by referring to the gendered roles of women in the family and by introducing accepted gender stereotypes in society is an indication of the gendered dimension of slow violence.

In parallel, the types of discrimination that manifest themselves on the basis of class, ethnicity, race, denomination, disability, gender and sexual orientation and that constantly oppress, dampen and damage the lives of individuals or various groups carry the unequal distribution of slow violence on the social level to a much more dramatic dimension. What makes this unequal distribution possible is the denial of the existence of such violence in the first place or interpreting its consequences either by condoning or minimising its effects or disavowing any culpability and social responsibility in its implication, which we identify as the consequences of *fatalistic normalisation*. These states of denial both maintain indifference and passivity in the face of persistent violence and serve to keep people's complicity in creating the current conditions of violence hidden. Even when such violence is identifiable, we witness the victim of violence being blamed and activists who underline the impacts of violence and harm being harshly reprimanded. This reprimand and blaming often take place as minimising the effects of violence and appealing to the socially conventional and acceptable discourses to dismiss and even silence the advocacy attempts. For example, especially in the face of the problem of youth unemployment, it is suggested that young people are too picky about work, and the so-called complacency of young people is cited as the main reason for the current unemployment (Gündoğdu, 2020). Local people and environmentalists who react to the plunder of the environment are characterised as irrational groups that are far from economic realism and constitute obstacles to economic development and

growth (Wapner, 2021). The women's movement, which draws attention to domestic violence against women and carries out a struggle against this violence, is accused of being divisive against the unity of society and undermining the family institution designated as the pillar of society (Ahmed, 2023). Violence thus ensues as an inevitable consequence of a well-functioning system that guarantees the usual forms of comfort and interest which only a privileged small fraction of society can achieve; it is presented as a necessity for the maintenance of the social order sought to be sustained, or as a necessity for economic development/growth. Such a presentation reinforces the idea that perpetual violence is inevitable, imminent, and, in some cases, necessary to some extent.

Daunted managerialism as slow violence

When the effects of different forms of violence and harm can no longer be attributed to external agents and/or imminent to so-called well-functioning systems through fatalistic normalisation, thanks to sustained activism and successful naming of the violence phenomenon (Brydolf-Horwitz, 2018; Ahmed, 2023), discursive practices of managing it begin to emerge through the formation of novel framings of the issue. The management discourse here works by calibrating the magnitude of the violence phenomenon and its harms while accepting its existence as a problem to be managed. Violence is regarded as controllable and tolerable so long as it does not pose an agitating issue in the eyes of society, such as an incident, disaster, massacre, or brutal murder that has taken place at a certain point in time. Or, a certain level of betterment is promoted or promised either through the discourses of policymakers or through the implementation of revised policies and laws, which results in a form of *cruel optimism* (Berlant, 2006). It is cruel because it constantly (re-)produces an image of a better life achievable yet creates an impasse against a radical social transformation to eliminate different forms of violence since it impedes people from detaching from what is already harmful or not working (Meer, 2022). Meer (2022) provides an excellent depiction of such cruel optimism about racial justice and how the most obvious and hostile forms of racism seemingly diminishing create an image of the systemic racial injustices disappearing over time. Yet, there seems to be wide acceptance of institutional, systemic practices resulting in racial injustices, which are justified through policies in the face of the flow of migration, being tough on crime, and the war on terrorism. While the policies on racial discrimination identify what is unacceptable and intolerable as extreme and prosecute these extreme forms of racism, they also implicitly designate tolerable and acceptable levels of racism. In this case, institutional racism cannot be managed by existing public policy formally outlawing self-evident and explicit racist individual attitudes and practices since it still persists and thrives on racial injustices deeply and insidiously embedded in the organisational structure of society. Such cruel optimism can be observed in various areas of life and constitutes a part of *daunted managerialism* since it requires the reproduction of an image of a better society that keeps optimism alive, if not for today, at least for the future, and people end up making do within the existing system retaining hope for the future. This also requires the capacity to calibrate the impacts of social and environmental harms not through radically eliminating them but through postponing and re-distributing their devastating impacts spatially and temporally. Through *daunted managerialism*, harm and violence become palatable or at least absorbable to some extent with promises of change and concealment of their long-term and cumulative detrimental effects – much like the boiling frog, or 'killing us softly' as in the song.

Cruel optimism as daunted managerialism can be observed in the study of Gamu & Dauvergne (2018) branded as corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies of mining companies in Peru. They present four cases of CSR activities revolving around income generation initiatives, institutionalised dialogue and compensation for eco-social damage. Throughout their analysis, they illustrate how these CSR activities serve a counter-mobilising function, especially by helping companies manage reactions from below. These CSR activities bring forward issues of distributing material benefits among communities and disguise the long-term harms of large-scale resource extraction to the involved communities. This indicates that mining companies slowly weave a dominant perspective acceptable to the involved communities using CSR programming, which also serves to conceal certain aspects of their main activities that can, in the long run, have catastrophic consequences. The affected communities, in turn, become implicated in their slow violence. Similar discourses can be observed in urban renewal and housing projects as well; their necessity and/or opportunities are promoted as sensible while their violent effects on particular groups (e.g., displacement) and/or places (e.g., gentrification) remain hidden (Rannila, 2021).

A more pessimistic aspect of *daunted managerialism* can be explicated through the government of the precarious. Lorey (2015) analyses precarity in neoliberal conditions within the framework of both a way of life of the subject, a way of managing their own life, and the principle of governing and regulating these subjects. Butler (2016) also points to an individualist style of responsibility that is on the rise in the neoliberal era, as the conduct of conduct, the mentality of 'every man for himself'. In turn, she notes that sovereignty today also corresponds to the demand for wider securitarian measures at the cost of collective efficacy and social responsibility (ibid.). In a predatory neoliberal global capitalist system where precarity is unequally distributed, the security of some can only be ensured by making others more precarious and even disposable. Butler (2016) states that today's dominant security regimes adopt a form of governmentality in response to (imagined or real) constant threats, which are both defensive (e.g., against global migration crisis) and intrusive (e.g., war on terror). *Precaritisation*, as a form of governmentality, is not exceptional but rather emerges as rules, social regulation and control; and refers to living with contingency and the unforeseeable. Governing through precaritisation requires the management of a threshold to the extent that it avoids resistance and insurgency in the face of perceived harms and threats, yet does not end precarity but governs through a state of insecurity. Hence, it is also necessary to reflect on how individuals manage their own precarity in the face of the constant possibility of threats in everyday life. Rising individual concerns and ever-increasing indifference to wider social problems can be seen as by-products of such security regimes and the government of the precarious (Lorey, 2015). So long as individual concerns are somehow managed, a state of indifference is manifested towards other precarious conditions and the people experiencing them more severely at those moments. Individuals may feel obliged to keep such indifference alive in order to cope with the difficulties and contradictions in their own lives. Indifference operates as a defence mechanism in two layers; either through finding solace in feeling less precarious and more resourceful compared to others or through bringing one's own individual concerns forward as excuses for incapacity to be bothered by others' precarious conditions, and thus attributing responsibility to others to deal with their own precarious conditions. Both work toward the denial of moral obligation and prevent the recognition of the interrelated nature of these conditions that create precarity as part of a whole, hence hindering the development of cognitive and emotional awareness to address and eliminate wider social problems

collectively. Here we can observe individuals or communities finding themselves ranking multiple precarious conditions in terms of nefariousness and immediacy to prioritise certain conditions to be managed over others. We identify such government of the precarious as one of the operating principles behind the slow violence of daunted managerialism since it hampers the necessary sociological imagination (Mills, 2000), which connects individual concerns and personal troubles to wider, structural social problems and most extreme, immediate harms to dispersed yet accumulating harms. This aspect of daunted managerialism operates only for treading water in a welter of detached individual concerns without providing radical and collective ways to understand and eliminate different forms of harm and violence.

Government of the precarious as daunted managerialism was observed in Turkey regarding the increase in violence against women cases during the Covid-19 pandemic measures. Especially during the lockdowns in 2020, there have been increased reports of domestic violence throughout the world, which resulted in the launch of the global UN campaign 'The Shadow Pandemic' (UN Women). However, in Turkey, the situation was highly nuanced. In March 2021, the president of Turkey withdrew from the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, widely known as the İstanbul Convention, on the grounds that it is damaging family values. This resulted in a public outcry in Turkey, especially after such an increase in violence against women incidents during the pandemic measures. At this point, the Minister of Family and Social Services participated in a television programme, presented some statistics regarding incidents of violence against women in Turkey and a select few countries, and claimed that such an increase happened at 'tolerable' levels in Turkey (Çelebi and Özbey, 2021). The statement does not specify what makes that increase tolerable nor for whom, but it intends to paint a picture of capably managing violence against women in the country in line with the ruling party's conservative social policy. The acts of violence, which have temporally accumulative and incapacitating effects on survivors' lives, are transformed into slow violence to the extent that it is found tolerable—a threshold—in terms of conservative social policies that favour the unity of family over the protection and wellbeing of women (Yetiş and Kolluoğlu, 2022). Violence against women is conceptualised as a private family matter that can only be resolved via re-building conservative family units and re-appropriating traditional gender stereotypes; imposing further responsibility on women, and advising them to become docile and patient to abusive husbands so long as the mundane forms of violence do not reach to extreme levels like severe injuries or murder. Managing the perception of violence against women in society, instead of addressing the bottom line of the problem, takes shape through the government of the precarious in terms of prioritising family values and remaining indifferent to violence against women as a women's rights issue and managing everyday violence until this threshold is burdened onto women's capacity to endure and manage on their own.

Another form of daunted managerialism is the prioritisation of certain violence over the other due to immediacy. This would involve multiple forms of violence; some are perceived as more important than others due to varying reasons. Hernández (2022) illustrates this through a study on varying temporalities of violence affecting the community response to them and comes to the conclusion that residents in the Global South choose to focus on faster disasters (e.g., earthquakes and floods) and deprioritise, e.g., the toxicity of the environment—even if they are aware of its existence and long-term harms on their bodies. This prioritisation may sound sensible to many readers, to allocate already limited resources to more imminent disasters; however, Hernández (2022) highlights that these faster disasters will probably not

diminish, and the impact of faster disasters and slowly accumulating violence will be further compounded in the future. The study of Cairns (2021) on accessibility to safe drinking water in New Jersey reveals a similar prioritisation among competing forms of violence, this time between increased plastic waste and water toxicity. Through a reproductive justice discourse, the mothers in the community argue for the need for bottled drinking water as part of their caring labour due to the government's failure to secure life-making conditions. The mothers, in this case, are aware of the long-term environmental harm caused by single-use plastics; however, they choose to prioritise the environmental well-being of people over ecology since access to safe drinking water is more urgent. How such prioritisation among sources of precarity results in devastating disasters costing thousands of lives is recently observed in Turkey, where zoning amnesty acts promoted by the ruling party as part of election campaigns over the years had been welcomed by citizens as easy and direct solutions to the housing crisis they faced while ignoring the ever-expected threat of an earthquake that might or might not have happened in then-near future. However, the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes did happen, resulting in the death of more than 50,000 citizens and injury to many more, and hundreds of thousands became homeless and/or displaced.

The above lines illustrate three varying forms of *daunted managerialism*, namely creating bottom-up perspectives endorsing such management, dictating the dominant perspective, and prioritising among multiple, temporally varying disasters, either through instigating cruel optimism or through governing precarity. All of these aim to *delay* the timing of tipping points by managing the attritional effects of slow violence. The tipping point in question is identified by a dominant perspective, as dictated from above or via prioritisation and immediacy from below. At this stage, the existence of violence is accepted, yet its attrition is still not acknowledged in its full capacity, and discursive practices of daunted managerialism—top-down or bottom-up—attempt to conceal or postpone them once again.

Afflictive condemnation as slow violence

In this article, we regard condemnation as naming, pointing out and disapproving of violent behaviours, actions and circumstances, such as sexual violence, racial harassment, workplace bullying and discrimination, as well as acknowledging the unjust and intolerable nature of their harmful consequences. Condemnation can be a first step towards continued, persistent demands for the elimination of violence—mostly owed to grassroots and activist organising—and instigate proper, coordinated, structural response to addressing it by policymakers, organisations and other nexus of power. However, condemnation can be conceptualised through the performative nature of *symbolic power* (Bourdieu, 1990), as it requires authority for effectiveness as well as a collective meaningful understanding. Thus, condemnation also has the capacity to reshape social realities through the naming and categorisation of social groups and to appropriate the emerging awareness of violence phenomenon and mislead it away from a wider comprehension of and commitment to social justice. The performativity of condemnation can function for directing public attention towards a particular issue not only by making it visible but even magnifying it beyond its actual scope, however, sometimes at the expense of hiding away other forms of violence or even exacerbating them. Or, it can function for distracting the attention away from the very subject who displays their condemnation of the issue, hiding their actual or potential culpability and complicity by projecting these to somewhere or someone else. Considering the outcomes of both, we argue that *afflictive condemnation* harbours either recklessness or

perfunctoriness, and sometimes disingenuity, in its performative nature regardless of the individual intentions put forward. Even if we can never be certain of the real nature of the condemnations, we can still observe the ways they operate and their consequences, hence their performative nature, as evidence; and people cannot be judged on the basis of their intentions but can be held accountable for the results of their (in)actions. Beyond that, even genuine intentions could be put forward as an excuse or justification in the face of the inefficacy or unintended consequences that the condemnation begets. Thus, whether the intentions are genuine or not, condemnation becomes *afflictive* when the condemner fails to assume ethical responsibility and critical reflexivity for its impacts and repercussions, which hide away or exacerbate the harms caused by different forms of violence. Afflictive condemnation as a form of slow violence paves the way for investigating the more subtle, hidden, unconscious and intersubjective dimensions of such discursive practices.

Afflictive condemnation operates as two faces of a coin: *hypersensitisation* and *desensitisation*. Hypersensitisation requires overemphasis on spectacular and most severe, furious forms of violence and crime; and is channelled by the media that is mostly organised around moral panic. In this scenario, some scientists and advocacy groups may contribute to hypersensitisation through half-baked explanations in the pursuit of moral entrepreneurship (Becker, 1963), disregarding the breath of ongoing structural violence. This moral entrepreneurship requires a performance of condemnation to the extent which makes it seem ardent, tenacious and serious enough to get public attention on the issues they are willing to put forward. On the other hand, while this entrepreneurship reveals issues worthy of public attention and demands changes in policies to address such issues within their particularities, it also veils the most systemic aspects of violence, permeating almost every domain of everyday life and keeping the system untouched as a whole. Such hypersensitisation of select, most spectacular forms of violence phenomenon, in turn, results in desensitisation towards less spectacular but widely experienced everyday violence that continues to culminate temporally and spatially. Desensitisation creates new depictions of tolerable levels of and targets for everyday sexism, racism, social exclusion and exploitation and re-naturalises their persevering existence in comparison to the most spectacular forms of violence. In practice, desensitisation results in everyday violence continuing to dampen the capabilities of people (DiAngelo, 2022); and in theory, it prevents the proper attention from being given to researching these less spectacular, temporally and spatially dispersed forms of violence and how they are linked to more spectacular forms of violence. For instance, the criminal justice system is utilised as a tool for addressing the hypersensitised forms of violence to soothe arising concerns in society while widespread but inconspicuous aspects of social injustice remain mostly ignored and desensitised (Ward, 2014).

One such example of afflictive condemnation is the rise of carceral feminism, which claims to fight against gender-based violence by advocating for harsher criminal punishments but, in fact, undermines the feminist goals of empowerment and social justice (Engle, 2020). Carceral feminism emerged as a result of the widespread, public condemnation of gender-based violence that was promoted by earlier feminist movements, which demanded radical changes to the criminal justice system against impunity as a first step toward lasting cultural transformation for its elimination (Martin, 1998; Goodmark, 2018). However, carceral feminism deviated from these movements by regarding criminal punishment as the sole effective practice to guarantee safety for the harmed and accountability for the perpetrators and arguing for a higher level of state control of the perpetrators instead of more effective, community-based solutions and empowerment.

This approach passivises women as victims, limits their control on the way the violence they experience is consigned to the state (Goodmark, 2018) and ends up appropriating feminist goals and practices towards the repressive state (Martin, 1998). In doing so, carceral feminism uses symbolic power to reshape social realities and divert attention from social justice. It hypersensitises certain forms of violence against women, such as rape or domestic abuse, while hiding away other forms of violence or oppression, such as racism, poverty or imperialism (Engle, 2020). It also desensitises the public to the harms caused by the criminal justice system itself, such as mass incarceration, police brutality or wrongful convictions. Moreover, it distracts attention away from its own culpability and complicity in reinforcing the neoliberal security regimes that are based on increased surveillance and punitive techniques and that often target marginalised communities disproportionately. In doing so, it ends up band-wagoning right-wing, conservative political movements and narratives (Lauri et al. 2023), such as 'being tough on crime' and retributive justice. While some carceral feminists may genuinely believe that harsher punishments are necessary to deter violence and protect women, they fail to recognise how their approach contradicts the feminist values of empowerment and social justice and how it may backfire by alienating potential allies, provoking resistance from perpetrators, or discouraging victims from reporting violence due to fear or stigma. Therefore, carceral feminism is an example of afflictive condemnation that requires further critical examination and challenge from diverse feminist perspectives.

In many cases, afflictive condemnation can take place via projective identification (Braddock, 2018) as a form of defence mechanism, through splitting undesirable, condemning the most hostile features of the self and projecting these features onto others as relocation and re-presentation. The condemnation here is an accusatory speech act where the accuser attributes some negative characteristic to someone else (ibid). Gender-critical feminists' arguments that harbour blaming and exclusion of transgender people are striking examples of afflictive con-demnation through accusatory speech acts, especially because of how they end up contradicting the feminist commitments to anti-discrimination, anti-oppression and intersectional social justice by being indifferent to vulnerabilities of others. Gender-critical feminism emerged as a reaction to the increasing recognition and visibility of trans rights and identities in society, which challenged the traditional binary understanding of sex and gender. Having said they define themselves as 'gender-critical' by denouncing the term 'trans-exclusionary radical fem-inists' as derogatory because of its connotation with transphobia, many of them keep questioning the very existence of transgender people including their self-determination rights (Westbrook and Schilt, 2014; Pearce et al. 2020) and stigmatising transgender women as delusional men (Shaw, 2022) which depict trans-gender people as potential threats to ciswomen and children. In support of their claims, many gender-critical feminists rely on false or misleading claims, cherry-picked data, and rhetorical strategies to create a moral panic about trans rights and iden-tities (Zanghellini, 2020) and appeal to the examples of anti-trans policies and practices in different contexts, such as edu-cation, health care, sports, and media, to justify their exclu-sionary stance towards trans people (Shaw, 2022). When their claims are criticised for their exclusionary results, they accuse the critics of trying to undermine their freedom of speech and even silence their voice, even if it is actually what they do to trans people (Zanghellini, 2020), and transgender people of being bullies who need to be feared, even if transgender people are victimised in the first place via becoming targets as these assertions can exacerbate transphobic violence and exclusion in society and threaten the lives of transgender people as a result

(Faye, 2021). [1] While not all gender-critical feminists necessarily share all of these exclusionary views or intentions, and surely their claims are not the originating reason for transphobia prevalent in society, they still fail to recognise how some forms or contents of their claims are used to manipulate social realities and divert attention from social justice. They also fail to address trans-inclusive counter-arguments such as how to define sex and gender in a more nuanced and flexible way that accounts for biological diversity and individual variation (Fausto-Sterling, 2000), how to balance trans rights and ciswomen's rights with-out resorting to exclusion or essentialism (Finlayson et al. 2018), or how to ensure fairness and inclusion in women's sports without denying trans athletes' participation (Jones et al. 2017). In this way, they drag the public attention into a closed-loop debate built around a set of stereotypes against transgender people while making it even harder to discuss the widespread real-life problems that transgender people disproportionately face throughout their lives, such as family rejection, bullying, homelessness and unemployment (Faye, 2021). This stand pre-vents solidarity, alliance, dialogue, empathy, and mutual understanding; instead, it causes polarisation and disconnection, entrenches oppositional categories, and prevents comprehensive analysis of violence in its relationality and complexity through an intersectional approach. Their discourse, unwittingly, ends up aligning with misogynistic, conservative, far-right political dis-course as well as weirdly falls in line with the anti-gender movement that appropriates gender-critical lenses against both LGBTQ+ rights and gender equality agenda. Thus, gender-critical feminists' claims that condemn the attempts of trans-inclusionary and intersectional feminism and that question the very existence of transgender people by denying their self-determination right and calling them delusional and aggressive constitute an afflictive condemnation on the basis of dis-regarding their bitter repercussions on the lives of transgender people and malignant reception in the society as a whole.

In relation to *afflictive condemnation* as accusatory speech acts, another aspect of projective identification, beyond splitting and projection of undesirable features onto others, takes place via disowning that negative aspect by no longer entertaining the idea of having that negative characteristic themselves (Braddock, 2018), as we see in *nice racism* (DiAngelo, 2022) or under the guise of a form of *benevolent sexism* (Glick and Fiske, 2011). More obvious examples can be a man claiming that he cannot be sexist just because he is in alliance with feminism, a white person repudiating the probability of being a racist just because they are tolerant and respectful of others' cultures or an employer asserting himself outside the exploitative and hierarchical mechanisms of capitalism just because he poses himself as being kind, fair and friendly enough to the employees. These are not genuine condemnations since these do not result in genuine actions to eliminate the existing systems of sexism, racism or capitalist exploitation yet only result in contentment with con-demning others who are regarded as doing something "really" harmful and, accordingly, themselves doing nothing harmful by definition. Thus, condemnation here stands for playing the game by its rules and within its boundaries rather than challenging against, or declining to play, the game. *Afflictive condemnation* does not produce any positive impact on radical societal trans-formation but rather hides away the violent, exploitative acts behind its façade, culminating out of sight as slow violence, and leaves no room for self-enquiry into positioning within the sys-tem. This is even observed among the white allies of antiracist movements, which contribute to excessive burnout of activists of colour due to their denial to self-examine and recognise their under-evolved racial consciousness (Gorski and Erakat, 2019; DiAngelo, 2022).

Such projective identification works through a grouping mechanism of rigid categorisation that diverts attention toward the extreme acts of people at the margins of the society, where the in-group positions itself in the middle and the majority in the society absolves itself from any culpability. Racism, sexism and capitalism are different but interrelated facets of structural violence; however, their impacts are defined through the most extreme, severe, and spectacular forms of violence, like racial harassment, gender-based violence and wild capitalism. For these, individual acts and incidents of violence are put forward as indications of racism and sexism, and the perpetrators are identified through clusters of prejudices and attitudes they possess, which beget the most extreme forms of racist and sexist behaviours (Mondon and Winter, 2020). Perpetrators are mostly associated with bigotry, fundamentalism, ignorance, and extremism—the uncivilised margins of society. What this results in is the concealment of everyday, mundane, naturalised forms of racism and sexism deeply embedded in the social structure (Gallagher, 2014; DiAngelo, 2022). Within these grouping mechanisms, people just condemn certain clusters of violent acts associated with certain groups of people regarded as culpable. This is, for example, evident in the condemnation of spectacular forms of sexual violence within a limited criminal justice framework, which always runs the risk of "turning sexual violence into the crime we love to hate" (Rose, 2021, p. 23). In this way, the criminal justice system provides gratifying ways of condemning these appalling crimes for the public, more than the ways to eliminate sexual violence, which is deeply embedded in the sexist social structure.

This form of *afflictive condemnation* takes place when the condemners differentiate themselves from these designated malevolent groups and the activities of these groups by automatically positioning themselves as better in comparison. This provides the condemners with absolution and redemption from racism and sexism, even when they are complicit in their reproduction in more insidious forms. What we see here is not a genuine condemnation of racism, sexism or capitalist exploitation but a repudiation of their most extreme forms associated with groups at the margins of society (Mondon and Winter, 2020). For example, perpetrators of the harms produced by capitalism are mostly attributed to rapacious, rich elites in the top 1% and corrupted politicians and decision-makers for their complicity. Needless to say, these groups have great impact and power in continuance of the capitalist system, benefit from it the most and make its harms even worse. Condemning these groups and holding them accountable for the harms of the capitalist system is understandable and necessary to some extent; however, the culpability of these harms, which have devastating and irreversible impacts that can no longer be hidden, is attributed overwhelmingly to 'wild capitalism'. Yet, the now-named violence phenomenon, wild capitalism, implicitly suggests that there are milder and tamed forms of capitalism and implies their preferability, like inclusive capitalism (Ahmed, 2014). What this results in are the concealment of everyday, mundane, naturalised forms of environmental and social harm that are almost automatically produced by global capitalism as a system (Zizek, 2008) even when it is not so wild. Thus, condemnation here goes beyond an accusatory speech act that provides the condemner with a degree of redemption and absolution via projective identification, through masking the reality that the majority of society is somehow complicit in the reproduction of capitalism, sexism and racism through benefiting from these exploitative and oppressive structures at varying degrees.

Cyberbullying is an interesting example demonstrating this. Brydolf-Horwitz (2018) explicates cyberbullying as slow violence, from how a young woman's victimisation led to the recognition of the term cyberbullying and gained density to the point that it entered into legislation. Brydolf-Horwitz (2018) conceptualises the slow violence of cyberbullying with its spatially complex relations and how the digital-physical divide conceals the highly rapid accretion of acts of violence and cruelty. The accumulation of disparate, invisible and seemingly uncoordinated emails, comments, messages, images and so forth was finally named cyberbullying through public outcry and activism and led towards the naming of this phenomenon. The policymakers and law enforcement attempted to manage the named phenomenon through changes to the criminal justice system, yet in practice, systematic responses to it remained punitive after the fact rather than towards its elimination (Brydolf-Horwitz, 2018). The case the author uses spans a long time since 2011, during which the world has also experienced a spectacular rise of alt-right, anti-gender movements that also organise and operate in the digital sphere. Their activities gained immense public and scholarly attention, and we are now witnessing how alt-right and cyberbullying, trolling and coordinated cyber-attacks are synonymised in the public sphere as well as scholarship (e.g., Nagle, 2017; Grant and MacDonald, 2020; Jones, 2020). Facing such a spectacular density of hate crimes perpetrated by alt-right countermovement in the form of cyberbullying, the question remains if this spectacle is overshadowing the cyberbullying of people who do not identify as alt-right, who do not adopt the obviously anti-gender hate speech. When the now-named violence phenomenon is increasingly being identified through certain groups for their violent actions, in this case cyberbullying being *hypersensitised* as part of the repertoire of alt-right rhetoric and explained away as a backlash to movements for equality and acquired rights, the *afflictive condemnation* of these certain groups takes place when the prevalence of cyberbullying in the rest of the society is overlooked. Perpetrators other than alt-right groups remain hidden and unrecognised simply because of their public performance of condemnation of, and putting a distance to, the identified group (e.g., alt-right) and underlying causes (e.g., backlash) and their public declaration of commitment to more egalitarian, non-discriminatory, anti-violence rhetoric. However, under this performance lies the construction of in-groups and out-groups rather than genuine commitments and the adoption of egalitarian and non-discriminatory principles. This mechanism is quite simple and operates through overstating and overemphasising the differences and glossing over the similarities between these groups.

Conclusion

Slow violence as a concept provides us with a new perspective to recognise and dismantle otherwise hidden and unseen forms of violence due to their spread across time and space. The effects of these do not manifest until they accumulate to the point of erupting in the most dramatic forms. In this paper, we argue that slow violence is not only a temporal and spatial phenomenon but is also performative in terms of various forms of its actualisation and varying impacts. Moreover, we contend that slow violence primarily operates as a *conduct of conduct* (Foucault, 2007), which involves a certain level of willing participation or at least resignation. We identified three distinct forms of operation that enable slow violence, which we refer to as fatalistic normalisation, daunted managerialism, and afflictive condemnation.

We argue that slow violence is the culmination of practices and discourses that ensure the continuance of existing violent circumstances and systems by undermining the potential for radical change in the form of both collective and individual participation and hindering the cognitive and emotional awareness of the links between different forms of violence and social harms, which is

prerequisite to build alternative coalitions or alliances against such violent systems. *Fatalistic normalisation* involves the active production of ignorance to prevent awareness and induces a sense of learned helplessness and resignation; whereas *daunted managerialism* involves the postponement of awareness in the form of cruel optimism that harbours hope for gradual betterment both in present and in the future, and the government of the precarious by keeping individuals and communities treading the water in their own troubles, in that preventing wider sociological and empowering political imaginations. Even when a degree of political awareness is achieved and embraced in society, we can witness that *afflictive condemnation* appropriates such awareness, misleads it away from a wider understanding of and commitment to social justice, and even funnels it towards most marginalised groups or overemphasises caricaturised depictions of evil in society that not only results in cascading victimisation of the most marginalised groups but also absolves the majority of society by veiling their culpability in the reproduction of the violent circumstances and systems. Furthermore, geographically dispersed examples used in this paper to explicate these forms of slow violence demonstrate that these discursive practices are being deployed globally as technologies of social control. All three forms operate in tandem to veil the links between different forms of violence and social harms; thus, in this paper, we attempt to 'name' them and provide an operational framework of slow violence to help unveil these links and pave the way towards cognitive and emotional awareness in order to facilitate the development of alternative coalitions and alliances that can challenge and transform these violent systems.

Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Note

1 Here, it might be worth reminding that there are also instances where some gender-critical feminists are bullied, harassed, and threatened by people who identify as trans people or are standing up for trans people; however, these mostly remain as individual cases and cannot be generalised in the form of an accusation against trans people as a group. In this note, we felt the need to clarify that we believe any form of violence, bullying and harassment must be condemned no matter whom/where they originate from. However, the condemnations of some gender-critical feminists that involve accusatory speech acts can become *afflictive* with respect to such generalisation in the face of prevalent transphobia in society and as a part of ongoing structural violence against trans people, thus, adding insult to injury. Furthermore, any approach equating the violence each group is exposed to is far from doing justice, not just because it suggests a false equivalency between them disregarding the unequal social power each has access to and presents an unnuanced understanding of violence in general, but also because this can pave the way to further polarisation by reinforcing the hostile and vengeful political climate which impedes assuming any accountability with critical reflexivity and runs against possible coalitions under an intersectional social justice feminism.

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