RETHINKING BIOPOLITICS TODAY: A CRITICAL INQUIRY

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RETHINKING BIOPOLITICS TODAY: A CRITICAL INQUIRY

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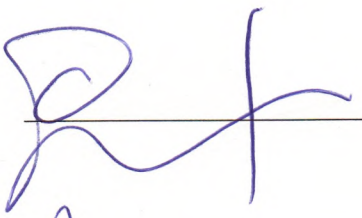
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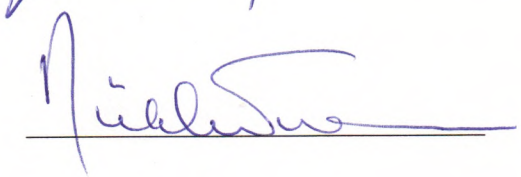
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June 2018

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Rethinking Biopolitics Today: A Critical Inquiry

This thesis is an inquiry on the subject matter of biopolitics and should be seen as an attempt for mapping out the theoretical continent that has been opened up by Michel Foucault. Throughout these pages, I have focused on the question of in what directions the said concept has been utilized as a theoretical perspective in explaining our present, the contemporary social and political world. This thesis concentrates on three issues corresponding to the chapters in the respective order. First, I have strived to give an appropriate answer to the question of what the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics implies. To this end, in the second chapter, I have given a detailed account of Foucault's usage of the said concept. After that, I have taken up the question of how biopolitics has been employed as an analytical standpoint in explaining the operationality of contemporary capitalism, and to this end I have discussed two prominent approaches: First, I have interrogated the viability of arguing for a linkage between the liberal governmentality and biopolitics and, second, given an account of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's reworking on the notion of biopolitics. Lastly, in the fourth chapter, I have focused on the question of how to think the notion of biopolitics in the face of those recent developments that seem to be bringing an intensified degree of political violence and a tendency of rising authoritarianisms by way of introducing Giorgio Agamben's reading of biopolitics, especially the hidden tie that is posited between biopolitics and the notion of sovereignty in his account. All in all, I believe that this study could serve as a suitable introduction for those who are interested in the theoretical debates around the notion of biopolitics, and it could open up grounds for future discussions.

ÖZET

Biyopolitikayı Bugün Yeniden Düşünmek: Eleştirel Bir İnceleme

Bu tez biyopolitika kavramı üzerine yazılmış bir incelemedir ve Michel Foucault'nun açtığı teorik kıtanın bir haritalandırma denemesi olarak görülmelidir. Takip eden sayfalarda bahsedilen kavramın teorik bir perspektif olarak günümüzü, güncel toplumsal ve politik dünyayı, açıklamada nasıl kullanılageldiği sorusuna odaklandım. Bu tez sırasıyla üç meseleyi ele alır: İlk olarak, Foucauldiyen biyopolitika kavramının neye işaret ettiği sorusuna uygun bir cevap vermeye çalıştım. Bu amaçla ikinci bölümde, Foucault'nun bahsedilen kavramı kullanışının detaylı bir değerlendirmesini yaptım. Sonrasında ise biyololitika kavramının günümüz kapitalizminin işleyişini açıklamak için analitik bir perspektif olarak nasıl kullanıldığı sorusuna odaklandım ve bu amaçla önde gelen iki yaklaşımı ele aldım: İlk olarak liberal yönetimsellik ve biyopolitika kavramları arasında doğrudan bir ilişki kurulup kurulamayacağını tartıştım. İkinci olarak da Michael Hardt ve Antonio Negri'nin biyopolitika kavramını yeniden ele alışlarının bir analizini sundum. Son olarak da, dördüncü bölümde, yakın zamanda gördüğümüz artan politik şiddet ve otoriter eğilimlerin yükselişi karşısında biyopolitika kavramının nasıl düşünülebileceği sorusuna Giorgio Agamben'in biyopolitika okumasına, özellikle de Agamben'in okumasında sunulan biyopolitika ile hükümranlık kavramları arasında kurulan gizli bağa, referans vererek yanıt vermeye çalıştım. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın biyopolitika kavramı çerçevesinde dönen teorik tartışmalara ilgi duyanlar için uygun bir giriş olacağına ve gelecekteki tartışmalar için bir zemin oluşturabileceğine inanıyorum.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a critical inquiry that takes the notion of biopolitics as its privileged object of analysis. By way of analyzing both Michel Foucault's own writings, interviews, and lectures as well as the works of some of the most prominent interlocutors in the theoretical debate that is generated around the subject matter of biopolitics, I try to build a theoretical discussion that revolves around the following question: In what ways is the theoretical perspective that is built on the basis of the notion of biopolitics utilized as an analytical standpoint in explaining our present, the contemporary social and political world? With this respect, this thesis is an attempt for mapping out the theoretical field established around the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics by way of critically reassessing some of the contemporary social and political accounts of the said concept. In the following pages, as a general introduction to this inquiry, I will try to briefly outline the overall research trajectory by way of putting an emphasis on the discussions that are made in each chapter.

In the second chapter (Foucault, Biopolitics, and Power), my primary aim is to outline the boundaries of the ground that this thesis is built upon. In other words, what the second chapter does is the preliminary work that is needed to be taken care of before any further discussions could be made. If I try to put it in a very concise manner, there are two closely interrelated themes in this chapter around which our discussions revolve: First is the notion of *biopolitics*, and the second is the notion of *power*.

What does the notion biopolitics imply? First of all, the term "biopolitics" is a product of neologism: It is the combination of two words, *bios* and *politics*. While

there is no need to explain what the word politics means at this time, when it comes to the word "bios", the exact translation from the Ancient Greek is life. Then, it could be inferred that biopolitics basically denotes the politics of life. While defining biopolitics in this way is more than plausible, however, it appears to me that such a definition could be a bit vague since what it designates could be very broad. In Thomas Lemke's words:

> The term is used to discuss political asylum policies, as well as the prevention of AIDS and questions of demographic change. Biopolitics may refer to issues as diverse as financial support for agricultural products, promotion of medical research, legal regulations on abortion, and advance directives of patients specifying their preferences concerning life-prolonging measures. (Lemke, 2011, p. 1)

Throughout this thesis, the way I am tending to use the term "biopolitics" does not specify such a broad cluster of things. On the contrary, the way I employ biopolitics designates a particular meaning that I elaborate by reading closely what Foucault has attributed to it in his works. To this end, I try to outline the historical development of the said concept. First, I try to give a brief account of the theories of biopolitics that predate Foucault's formulation. Then, I try to delineate how Foucault used the term by way of tracing the development of the concept from "The Birth of Social Medicine" (Foucault, 2000b) where it first appeared to texts dating to the year 1976, namely the last chapter of the first volume of *History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1978) and the lecture dating 17 March 1976 at the Collège de France, which was later published in *Society Must Be Defended* (Foucault, 2003).

For Foucault, the notion of biopolitics designates a reconfiguration that has taken place in the order of politics, or more accurately it designates a historical shift that has situated biological life at the center of the relations of power and political strategies in Western societies beginning from the late 18th century. Indeed, for Foucault, the emergence of biopolitics marks the threshold of modernity: "For

millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question" (Foucault, 1978, p. 143). Perhaps, most importantly, the notion of biopolitics, for Foucault, designates a transition from "the right to take life or let live" (Foucault, 1978, p. 136) to "a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death" (Foucault, 1978, p. 138). That means for Foucault what is at stake is no other than the emergence of a regime of power "whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through" (Foucault, 1978, p. 139). However, it would be erroneous to assume that notion of biopolitics stands as a stable concept. First, the fate of the concept of biopolitics remains unknown, as beginning with the year 1977, with the lectures on *Security, Territory, Population* (Foucault, 2009), Foucault's attention gravitates more to the notion of governmentality, and it seems that the notion of biopolitics is somehow abandoned. Does this suggest a radical break out of countenance of biopolitics, or that biopolitics remains an unfinished project? Second, there is the crucial issue that pertains to the problematic status of death in the biopolitical regimes: Should one understand the notion of biopolitics primarily in terms of a regime of power that fosters life, or a configuration that paves the road to the worst genocides of the history has ever seen? Perhaps, I should stop for now, as I will discuss each of these issues in a detailed way in the following pages.

The other focal point that our discussions revolve around in the second chapter involves seeking an answer to the question of how the notion of power is formulated in Michel Foucault's works dating to late 1970s. Indeed, the second chapter starts with a relatively long discussion on the Foucauldian notion of power. While the question of why I dwell upon giving an account of the notion of biopolitics

could be more easily answered, as it is the very locus of this study, why I give an account of Foucault's concept of power might not be clear at first sight. Nonetheless the two are related: Throughout Foucault's works, the notion of biopolitics first and foremost appears to be conceptualized in terms of a reconfiguration in the way in which power is exercised. So then, to start right away with a discussion of power appears to me as a logical and viable strategy. Very briefly speaking, Foucault posits the concept of power as a decentralized network that runs across the social. Perhaps the greatest lesson we could learn from Foucault is how he posits the notion of power beyond a thinking of it solely as an instance of repression: That means, to understand how relations of power operate in an appropriate way necessitates us to go beyond lingering on the solely the negative effects of power and striving to understand the productive aspects as well. However, there is also another reason why I put so much emphasis on the concept of power: It is directly related with Foucault's methodological approach that orients his studies on power "toward a definition of the specific domain formed by relations of power, and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis" (Foucault, 1978, p. 82), in short, in terms of *an analytics of power*. Indeed, I have tried to remain loyal to such a way of conceptualizing power, employ it as sort of a maxim, and evaluate those more recent interpretations of biopolitics from the perspective that is generated by this specific way of understanding of power.

When it comes to the third chapter (The Government of the Living and the Biopolitical Production), my inquiry is no longer limited to analyzing Foucault's own account of biopolitics. Also, there is an important change in the way that I approach the question of biopolitics. Starting with this chapter, the primary question that I address and seek an answer is the way in which the theoretical framework that

is established around the notion of biopolitics stands to be utilized for making our social and political world intelligible. To be more specific, I try to bring together two distinct theoretical currents that could be seen as sharing, to some extent, similar concerns, utilizing the notion of biopolitics in order to explicate the characteristics of late capitalism that they simultaneously bring into existence through conceptualizing them: Namely, the seemingly unstoppable advent of neoliberalism, the expansion of capitalism to the global scale, and the diffusion of market relations to almost all aspects of social life.

The first theoretical approach that I will give an account of is Thomas Lemke's attempt for situating the notion of biopolitics in the broader theoretical framework that is generated by the notion of governmentality. Indeed, this line of thinking could be seen as a more orthodox reading of Foucault's work and it could be understood as an attempt for reframing the notion of biopolitics in terms of the government of the living under the context of neoliberalism. However, there appears a problematic that needs to be addressed: When Foucault coined the concept of biopolitics, he substantially formulated it in terms of the operationality of regulatory mechanisms of the newly born modern State. On the other hand, when it comes to the question of how Foucault conceptualized his notion of governmentality, there are two, to some extent opposed, modalities of government he has formulated in his lectures at the College de France between the years 1977 and 1979: The governmental regime that consists of the correlation of the *raison d'État* and *the apparatus of police*, and *liberal governmentality*. Indeed, in the third chapter, I will try to give an account of how these two modalities differ, and make an argument that Foucault's exposition of biopolitics dating to the year of 1976 seems to be formulated more in line with the former. So, while Lemke's suggestion might be

regarded as a plausible strategy to adopt, there appears a necessity for the reformulation of the notion of biopolitics itself before applying it in order to make sense of the context of late capitalism.

Indeed, such a necessity has directly led me to the discussion that revolves around Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's coauthored works which could be seen as a major reworking of the notion of biopolitics; this time putting an emphasis on the dynamics of production. First, I present the key aspects of Hardt and Negri's account while briefly discussing the major influences on it: Namely the Deleuzian concept of *societies of control*, a specific reading of Marxism which has its roots in the Operaismo (Italian workerist) tradition, and lastly their distinct way of interpreting of Foucault's work. And, second, I focus on Hardt and Negri's concept of *biopolitical production* and their reformulation of the concept of *biopower*. I try to discuss how the notion of biopolitics functions in the making of their account of contemporary politics. Briefly speaking, the notion of biopolitics in Hardt and Negri's perspective has a two-folded operationality: One the one hand, biopolitics in terms of a regime of biopower, designates a decentralized regime of control, which makes the state-form obsolete, and an intensified condition of exploitation of labor as capitalism now extends even to the remotest corners of the globe. However, on the other hand, in terms of the biopolitical production, biopolitics also marks an immense growth in the socialization of labor, which renders the role of the capitalist class completely parasitic and unnecessary and opens up a possibility for the emergence of a post-capitalist democracy.

As the conclusion of this chapter, I will argue that, while Hardt and Negri's account seems to be capturing what is vital in the transformation in the circuits of late capitalism that has been taking place since 1980s and in those forms of struggle

that have emerged against the domination that the global capitalism entails, their account seems to be falling short of serving as an analytical perspective for explicating the two recent developments: First is the tendency of the concentration of power beyond any existing legal boundaries in an unprecedented way. And, second, it is the role of the intensified political violence, and the multiple ways it operates, which seem to be an inseparable constituent element in the configuration of our contemporary social and political contexts.

The fourth chapter (Biopolitics and Sovereignty) is devoted precisely to this question of how it is possible to rethink the notion of biopolitics, especially in the face of the recent developments that seem to be bringing an intensified degree of lethality and destruction, on the one hand, and an immense degree of centralization of power, on the other hand. In this chapter, I try to deal with the question of whether a return to the theme of sovereignty is a conceptually viable solution or not. To this end, I will be exclusively focusing on Giorgio Agamben's work which can be seen as an attempt for forging an intrinsic tie between the notions of biopolitics and sovereignty. In this chapter, first, I will try to outline some elements from Carl Schmitt's political thought since it is one of the most crucial influences in the making of Agamben's theoretical perspective. Second, I will try to outline the main pillars of Agamben's reformulation of the notion biopolitics: From Agamben's perspective, biopolitics no longer marks the threshold of modernity as it apparently did for Foucault, but rather it stands at the very core of the Western political tradition: Topically as a mechanism that is inscribed in the sovereignty that distinguishes between whose life is worth living and whose does not. Then, I will move to the central locus of this chapter which is that of explicating Agamben's reformulation of biopolitics in terms of a permanent state of exception, by way of a close reading of

his concepts of *bare life* and *sovereign ban*. And lastly, I will try to explain how the concentration camp is formulated as the hidden paradigm of modern biopolitics in Agamben's account. In the very end of this chapter, I will try to evaluate whether Agamben's reformulation of the notion of biopolitics could be seen as an appropriate one in for analyzing our contemporary world.

CHAPTER 2

FOUCAULT, BIOPOLITICS, AND POWER

2.1 Introduction

This thesis, for the most part, is an attempt for critically reassessing the contemporary social and political theories that are generated around the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics. Indeed, in this chapter, I want to first outline what the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics implies, before moving to discuss those more recent interpretations of the said concept. In other words, this chapter aims to lay the grounds for the general theoretical framework that this thesis is to be built upon. Thus, it reflects the preliminary work that is needed to be taken care of before any of our further claims could be made.

In a very brief manner, for Foucault, the notion of biopolitics designates a reconfiguration that has taken place in the order of politics, or more accurately a historical shift that has situated biological life at the center of the relations of power and political strategies in Western societies beginning from the late 18th century. As the concept of biopolitics is intrinsically tied to the question of power, to commence with the conceptualization of power seems to me as a viable strategy to adopt for our trajectory and aims. Moreover, if what is under scrutiny is no other than an attempt to draw an *analytics of power*, in other words a "specific domain formed by relations of power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 82), such a strategy renders itself nearly as compulsory. One might object to such a strategy and raise the following question: Is it necessary to start with the notion of power; is it not quite obvious what it designates? While it is true that, the notion of power is frequently used, almost in an arbitrary way, in nearly all discourses or narratives somehow related to politics; I think that, it appears

to be as one of the most troublesome and demanding concepts to deal with: There exists a considerable degree of vagueness regarding what it designates.[1]

Indeed, as native speakers of the Turkish language, the problem seems to be apparent. The word "iktidar"[2] has a very vague meaning to begin with. While probably it would not be sufficient on its own, the definition that is given in the official dictionary of TDK could be a good starting point. According to TDK, there are four meanings corresponding to the word "power": First, it is the "ability to do something". Second is the "the authority and ability to perform something". Third definition is "the authority to hold state administration and use state power". And, lastly it is the "persons and entities holding such authority". So then, what we are faced with is a strange circumstance. The passage from a capacity of someone to do something to the authority of the State is at an unprecedented pace. When we take look at the daily political usage of the said term, doing so does not make things easier. The term "power" is generally associated with the state, governing parties, patriarchal order, and so on. First of all, power appears as something negative, usually entails coercion or domination; that means there is the very risk for confusing some negative outcomes of the exercise of power with power itself; or worse, totally reducing power to those negative outcomes. That means, we could easily overlook the productive aspects of power, which, in the end, could prevent us from understanding how power operates. Second, there is the very risk for understanding power as it is confined to the operations of the state. To be clear, the way I will employ the said concept in this dissertation is strictly in a Foucauldian sense. Beyond

[1] It is important to mention here that this is by no means speaking of a vagueness in Foucault's conceptualization of power. What is at stake here is the ambiguous meaning that is attributed to the notion of power in its daily or common usage.

[2] http://www.tdk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_gts&arama=gts&guid=TDK.GTS.5ab75df938ad98.59167542

the fact that the central problematic that I pose in this inquiry is located in the Foucauldian theoretical project, appropriately understanding Foucault's way conceptualization of power would assist us to overcome such vagueness and possible misunderstandings as we shall see in the following pages.

2.2 Foucauldian conceptualization of power

The notion of power (pouvoir) appears as a substantial theme that runs across Michel Foucault's work, especially beginning with his writings, interviews, and lectures following the mid-1970s. Foucault's genealogies on various subject matters, ranging from psychiatry to sexuality, could be seen as critical genealogical studies seeking an answer to the question of how relations of power operate in the modern settings of the West. It could be easily said that beyond providing a handful toolset for those who are practicing in social sciences, his conceptualization of power is a decisive intervention which marks a significant break from the once dominant Western social and political thought. In the following pages, I will try to give a brief outline of what Foucauldian concept of power implies as an introduction to our inquiry. I think that, commencing in this way is a feasible strategy to adopt; as nearly all our future discussions will involve different modalities or configurations of relations of power.

2.2.1 Power as a relationship

For Foucault,[3] power is neither a substance nor a form; even it could not be regarded as a thing or an entity; power appears as "the name that one attributes to a complex

[3] Throughout Foucault's writings, interviews, and lectures we could come across different accounts of the conceptualization of power. Indeed, we could speak of a gradual transformation that has taken place in how Foucault has understood the term, from a relationship akin to a warlike domination to that of a relationship of government. To clarify things at the very beginning, it is the latter what we are speaking of.

strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). Power, for Foucault, is also not something that could be located at some center, especially the State or in fact any kind of institution, and it could not be attributed solely to any group's interest or a specific person's possession. Power is not a supplementary structure above society, conversely it operates at the grassroots of the social fabric, to an extent of being the precondition of all social existence. Lastly, it is also important to mention here that power does not imply an intrinsic strength that one is endowed with or lacks. So then, where should we locate power? For Foucault, power "is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). That is to say, from a Foucauldian perspective, the notion of power implies something that operates through the vast networks of the social or something that penetrates the very capillaries of a given society.

Maybe one of the most clear-cut definitions of the concept could be found in an interview between Paul Rabinow and Michel Foucault in 1982 which was later published as "The Subject and Power" ((Foucault, 2000d): Power, for Foucault, is a specific type of relationship as "a way in which some act on others", and it "exists only as exercised by some on others" (Foucault, 2000d, p. 340). Surely, it is a partial definition and it needs to be specified. So then, what is the distinctive trait of the relations of power that distinguishes it from other modalities of relations?

> In effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions. (Foucault, 2000d, p. 340)

So then, we could come to a conclusion that throughout the Foucauldian theoretical framework, power is formulated strictly as a relationship that is only possible on the grounds that someone acts on other's action, and power only exists through its operationality. So far so good. We shall return to "The Subject and Power". Again, in

this text, Foucault proposes that power can only be exercised on relatively "free subjects" (Foucault, 2000d, p. 342). What should we understand from this phrase of "free subjects"; for instance, is power a pure matter of consent-building? For Foucault, surely, the exercise of power does not stand as a purely matter of consent, though "the exercise of power can never do without it" (Foucault, 2000d, p. 340). But intriguingly, for Foucault, what power presupposes is the element of freedom:

> Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are "free." By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available. Where the determining factors are exhaustive, there is no relationship of power: slavery is not a power relationship when a man is in chains, only when he has some possible mobility, even a chance of escape. (Foucault, 2000d, p. 342)

In order to grasp what Foucauldian notion of power implies, this specific point is very crucial. What Foucault is telling us is not that the one who exercises power and the one on whom power is exercised should be seen as equally willing to participate in this very relation or they are equally affected by the outcomes of this very action. What needs to be immediately highlighted are two things: First, for Foucault, the one on whom power is to be exercised should be recognized as a subject who is capable to act. Second, the one on whom power is to be exercised must be relatively free; that means "a whole field of possibilities" (Foucault, 2000d, p. 341) to act should be available for him or her at this very encounter with power. Therefore, the exercise of power and refusal to submit to it cannot be totally separated, and this brings the notion of resistance right into the scene. Indeed, in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault explicitly argues for the inseparability of power and resistance: "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power." (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). This means that, the exercise of power cannot be thought in terms of a mere

process of mechanical causation. For example, exercising of disciplinary power on a given body does not immediately fabricate a docile subject or regulatory techniques of biopolitics do not fabricate controllable populations. In other words, exercise of power always involves some degree of confrontation, maybe not always a war like confrontation but always an *agonal* one; if we put it in other words, what power presupposes as its very condition of emergence is nothing other than resistance.

2.2.2 Against the repressive hypothesis

Up to this point, we could speak of Friedrich Nietzsche's influence on Foucault's conceptualization of power. Following Gilles Deleuze's reading of Foucault's work, Foucauldian notion of power may be better understood as a relation between forces in a strictly Nietzschean sense:

> [F]orce is never singular but essentially exists in relation with other forces, such that any force is already a relation, that is to say power: force has no other object or subject than force. . . . Foucault is closer to Nietzsche . . . while force has no object other than that of other forces, and no being other than that of relation: it is 'an action upon an action, on existing actions, or on those which may arise in the present or future'; it is 'a set of actions upon other actions'. (Deleuze, 2006, p. 70)

There is actually no reason to disagree with Deleuze, as we could see how close this definition of force stands to that of Foucault's understanding of power. However, while such a way of reading appears to me as more than plausible, understanding the notion of power in terms of relations of force might raise a couple of misunderstandings: First, what distinguishes the exercise of power from the exercise of violence? Second, does the exercise of power always entail domination? Or, in a more general sense, is power always repressive?

I would like to start with the first question: How should we think of the notion of violence in its relationship to power? It is important to mention here that, in

Foucault's later texts, there seems to be a categorical distinction between the exercise of power and the exercise of violence, especially if we take these actions on an individual or singular basis: When it comes to the question of defining violence; Foucault formulates the notion of violence in relatively narrow terms: "A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities" (Foucault, 2000d, p. 340). However, what seems to me as important is that, it would be erroneous to assume a strict dichotomy, similar to that of once Hannah Arendt did (Arendt, 1970), between political power and violence in Foucauldian theoretical framework. Indeed, for Foucault, "[o]bviously the establishing of power relations does not exclude the use of violence" (Foucault, 2000d, p. 340), and it might become difficult to distinguish power and violence from one another when we start discussing in terms of the modalities of relations of power. For example, in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1979), we clearly see that, disciplinary power involves more than anything else a direct action upon bodies and the demarcation line between power and violence becomes more and more difficult to accurately pinpoint.

Let's move on the second question: What is the distinction between power and domination; should we understand that all relations of power are at the same time relations of domination? Here is how Foucault conceptualizes the relations of domination:

> When an individual or social group succeeds in blocking a field of power relations, immobilizing them and preventing any reversibility of movement by economic, political or military means, one is faced with what may be called a state of domination. In such a state, it is certain that practices of freedom do not exist or exist only unilaterally or are extremely constrained and limited. (Foucault, 1997, p. 283)

That suggests that the state of domination refers to a certain configuration of relations of power which usually coincides with the exercise of violence and

coercion. Indeed, we could crudely formulate domination as the negative form of power. However, what is important is that the state of domination stands as one of the possible scenarios among others, and it would be erroneous to assume that domination expands to the whole spectrum of the exercise of power.

When it comes to the question of repression, the following could be said: For Foucault, the notion of repression appears as an insidious notion, reducing power solely to an instance of repression is one fatal flaw while conceptualizing the notion of power. Revisiting Foucault's account in an interview dating 1977, which is translated to English as "Truth and Power" (Foucault, 2000e), would be quite informative on this issue. Briefly, for Foucault, apart from the fact that there had not existed any detailed studies on the operation of power for a long time; the problem of power was usually posed by both the Left and the Right in wholly negative terms and in a narrow fashion. On the Right, the problem was posed only in terms of the constitutional order and sovereignty of the state, in strictly juridical terms. On the Left, including Marxists and anarchists, it was posed at best in terms of the state power and its apparatuses. What is more striking for Foucault is that, both sides have utilized the notion of power as a way for denouncing the adversary camp: Socialist power was denounced by its opponents as a form of totalitarianism, on the other hand, power in Western capitalism was only understood in terms of class domination by most Marxists. What was common to those analyses is that power is envisaged as a purely negative instance whose function is nothing but repression and prohibition. For Foucault, understanding the notion of power solely in terms of repression makes one to fail to notice the productive aspects of power. In his words:

> What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no; it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network that runs through the whole

> social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault, 2000e. p. 120)

So, from a Foucauldian perspective, relations of power function in multiple ways: They may emancipate or subjugate, put limits or remove those limits, and so on. In short, one of the great lessons that we could learn from Foucault is the following: To understand how relations of power operate and how they hold good in an appropriate way necessitates us to go beyond lingering on the solely the negative effects of power and striving to understand the productive aspects as well.

2.2.3 Power beyond juridical terms

Indeed, for Foucault, understanding power in terms of repression has an intrinsic tie with what he calls as *juridical conception of power*. In Foucault's words: "In defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law that says no— power is taken, above all, as carrying the force of a prohibition." (Foucault, 2000e, p. 120) So then, we should turn our attention to maybe the most crucial aspect of Foucault's conceptualization of power. This is no other than its providing both a critique of and an alternative to what might be called as juridical theories of power that has been dominating the Western political thought dating as early as to the Middle Ages. In what terms should we understand Foucault's critique of juridical understanding of power? Does it entail a complete erasure of the role of the law (or any function that could be grouped under the legal domain) from the picture in the analysis of relations of power?

Surely, for Foucault, while law has not been a privileged area of interest, it appears as an integral domain for understanding how various modalities of relations of power operate in various configurations: Law "is the code according to which

power presents itself and prescribes that we conceive of it" (Foucault, 1978, p. 87-88). In an interview conducted by André Berten dating 1981, later published as "What Our Present Is", Foucault explicitly remarks that:

> But just as with madness, crime and prisons, I encountered the problem of rights, the law, and the question that I always asked was how the technology or technologies of government, how these relations of power understood in the sense we discussed before, how all this could take shape within a society that pretends to function according to law and which, partly at least, functions by the law. (Foucault, 2007, p. 142)

However, the crucial question that needs to be answered is the following: Could the model of law, or juridico-legal rationality in general, provide us an appropriate analytical framework while seeking an answer for how relations of power operate?

The short answer is no. As I briefly outlined above, power is strictly a relationship that is exercised on the basis of an action over others' actions. From such a definition, it follows that law could provide us a representation or a crystallization of an instance in the operationality of relations of power at best. However, there always remains something lacking in the model of law regarding the operationality of power, or, in other words, there is always something in excess from the standpoint of relations of power. We could also argue that exercise of power predates the existence of law to the extent that law appears as one of the effects power produces while acknowledging this relationship is a reciprocal one. As a result, we could conveniently argue that the way Foucault conceptualizes power cannot be appropriately analyzed under the model of law or reduced to the inner workings of the legal order. Moreover, we could say that, it is explicitly distinguished from that of the operationality of the law. Indeed, through his writings, interviews, and lectures, Foucault clearly enunciates that his attempt is no other than to "construct an analytics of power that no longer takes law as a model and a code" (Foucault, 1978, p. 90).

So, from which perspective does Foucault's approach diverge from those classical juridical theories of power, and what are their deficits for him? For Foucault, the problem resides in the way that classical juridical theories have dealt with the notion of power by way of taking it strictly as a problem that is to be dealt within the theory of right.[4] The contractual model that has dominated the Western political theory for a long a time, or at least since Thomas Hobbes well-known intervention[5], stands as a perfect example. That means, political power is formulated specifically as a right that is constituted through a series of juridical acts. And, what is important is that, the series of juridical operations that found the political power as a right, is modelled akin to "an exchange of contracts" (Foucault, 2003, p. 13), eventually surrendered in order to constitute a greater sum of power, or to erect models of sovereignty.

If we put in more precise terms, it is this sort of intrinsic economism what Foucauldian attitude stands as a powerful critique of. Again, it is very important to emphasize that what is at stake here is no other than what the contractual model implies. That is to say, power is thought as it is something that could be possessed, something that could be exchanged with somebody else, or something that one could be separated and alienated from. From such a perspective, understanding of power is

[4] By right, I refer here not just to law, but the whole juridico-legal system and its apparatuses, mechanisms, and so on.

[5] Thomas Hobbes's work usually has been associated with the political theories that posit the absolutist state. Although the "Leviathan" is mentioned only three times in the whole course of the book, it might be said that, the mythical image of Leviathan as a political symbol is so powerful that it overshadows the rest of his theoretical account. For sure, in Leviathan, Hobbes argued for a state that is to be ruled exclusively by an absolute sovereign; but at the same time, he paved the road that would attain to the liberal constitutional state and the genesis of theories of social contract. The Leviathan-state surely has a divine and absolute character, but its power is not divinely derived; it is established on the basis of a covenant or a contract that is agreed on by a multitude of people. It is important to mention here that this was a radical break from the traditional theories of the sovereignty of which had been based on the divine rights of the kings. For further reading: See Hobbes's Leviathan (Hobbes, 2005)

not so different than that of a commodity or wealth in general. If we cite directly from Foucault's *Society Must Be Defended*:

> [P]ower is not something that is divided between those who have it and hold it exclusively, and those who do not have it and are subject to it. Power must, I think, be analyzed as something that circulates, or rather as something that functions only when it is part of a chain. It is never localized here or there, it is never in the hands of some, and it is never appropriated in the way that wealth or a commodity can be appropriated. (Foucault, 2003, p. 29)

Understanding power in juridico-legal terms has another highly problematic outcome, which is evoking the problematic notion of sovereignty.[6] Maybe, we should start with what the notion of sovereignty implies[7]. Crudely put, a common definition of the notion of sovereignty could be formulated as the absolute right and authority of the body politic over itself. The notion of sovereignty has been one of the most revisited central problems throughout the history of Western political thought (from Bodin to Agamben). In Western societies, the theories of sovereignty have had very strong ties with the juridical categories, and at the same time, the establishment of juridical systems has always been centered around the structures of sovereignty ever since the Middle Ages. If we directly cite Foucault's words:

> The juridical edifice was, then, formed around the royal personage, at the demand of royal power, and for the benefit of royal power. When in later centuries this juridical edifice escaped from royal control, when it was turned against royal power, the issue at stake was always, and always would be, the limits of that power, the question of its prerogatives. . . . The general system, or at least the general organization of the Western juridical system, was all about the king: the king, his rights, his power, and the possible limits of his power. That, basically, is what the general system, or at least the general organization, of the Western juridical system is all about. (Foucault, 2003, p. 26)

[6] For Foucault, this close proximity stands as so inescapable that even when juridical discourses oppose or question the extent of the authority of the sovereign, they remain to be bounded to it in one way or another.

[7] It should be noted that, what is under scrutiny here is not Foucauldian concept of sovereign power; but the notion of sovereignty.

Once again, Hobbes's account is a perfect example; any possibility for the exercise of power is strictly limited to the actions of the sovereign, who represents the soul of the mighty Leviathan, which derives its legitimacy from and is constituted on the basis of the so-called covenant. Indeed, Foucault's work could be regarded as an attempt for breaking from this tradition for good, as he aims "to study power outside the model of Leviathan, outside the field delineated by juridical sovereignty and the institution of the State." (Foucault, 2003, p. 34) As Banu Bargu puts it: "[I]t is the counterconcept of Foucault's political theory. First, sovereignty constitutes the negative pole of Foucault's oeuvre in contrast to which Foucault's exploration of power relations unfolds" (Bargu, 2014, p. 456). Or, in other words, Foucault's has been an attempt to "cut off the king's head" in political thought and break away the tradition that is obsessed with the sovereign personage.

Up to this point everything seems clear, but we need to answer the following question: What appears as so problematic regarding conceptualizing power in terms of sovereignty, and why does the king's head need to be cut off any way? First, attributing the legitimate exercise of power solely to the sovereign creates a schema in which power emanates from a single source. Moreover, what is imposed is nothing other than a perspective that power only operates as a coercive or as a mechanism of command. Second, it is the identification of the exercise of power in the operationality of law which, in the end, functions as a mechanism of prohibition. In a very brief way, what is lacking in such a way of conceptualization, is no other than the actual operationality of relations of power; how they function in multiple ways in localized contexts, how they are diffused throughout the whole range of social relations, and more importantly how they establish a productive network that runs across the social.

2.3 Foucauldian conceptualization of biopolitics

After explicating what Foucauldian notion of power involves; at this instance, we are able to proceed to the focal point, the notion of biopolitics. In Foucault's works the notion of biopolitics is formulated primarily as a redistribution in the analytics of power. So then, in the following pages, we will be discussing the said notion from the perspective of relations of power. But, before discussing biopolitics from the perspective of relations of power, let's start with the historical development of the concept itself.

2.3.1 Historical sources of the concept

The term "biopolitics" appears for the first time in the wake of the 20th century, and it was coined by Rudolf Kjellén[8], in the year 1905 in his two-volume work entitled *The Great Powers* (Stormakterna: Konturer kring samtidens storpolitik), and later in 1916, Kjellén developed it further in his book that is entitled as *The State as a Form of Life* (Staten som livsform). What has characterized Kjellén's account was his introduction of the biological to the domain of the political. To be more precise, the novelty of his approach could be understood in terms of both the naturalization of politics and at the same time a highly organicist understanding of the state (Lemke, 2011; Esposito 2008). Indeed, his understanding of politics was fairly different than those common formulations of that time period which usually relied on some classical theoretical frameworks that were built around categories such as law, sovereignty, constitution, democracy, and so on. From the perspective of Kjellén "the political is nothing else but the continuation of nature at another level and therefore destined to incorporate and reproduce nature's original characteristics" (Esposito,

[8] A Swedish political scientist who lived between 1864 and 1922 and elaborated on an organicist or vitalistic state theory whom we also owe the term of "geopolitics".

2008, p. 17). It is important to emphasize here that Kjellén's work was not the single source for the notion of biopolitics to culminate. We encounter the theme of biopolitics in the works of some biologists who argue for "the connection, not only analogical, but real, between politics and biology" (Esposito, 2008, p.18).[9] And, not very surprisingly, the term "biopolitics", though this time to a great extent amalgamated with the notion of race, emerges in the works of the intellectuals aligned with the National-Socialist movement in Germany. Lastly, in the 1960s, the notion of biopolitics has also emerged in the Anglo-American political scientific circles. But, this time, it was "grounded in the belief that in order to analyze political structures and processes, we need to take up research from the biology of behavior, socio-biological concepts and evolutionary theory" (Lemke, 2009, p. 2).

2.3.2 Foucault's usage of the term "biopolitics"

Foucault has brought the notion of biopolitics into the discussion in the year 1974 in the series of lectures at the State University of Rio de Janeiro which was later published in the title of "The Birth of Social Medicine" (Foucault, 2000b) in terms of social medicine. Later on, he developed the concept further in the last chapter of *The Will to Knowledge* (Foucault, 1978) and throughout his lecture dating 17 March 1976 at the Collège de France, which was later published in *Society Must Be Defended* (Foucault, 2003). While it is debatable to what extent Foucault himself was influenced by the works that had preceded his own, the way he conceptualizes his version of the notion of biopolitics stands as fairly different than the previous iterations: First, the concept of biopolitics throughout Foucault's usage can no longer be seen as an attempt for building an organicist theory of the state or the society.

[9] Most notably, it is Jakob von Uexküll's "Staatsbiologie: anatomie, physiologie, pathologie des states" which was published in the year 1920.

Second, it is also no longer a matter of analyzing socio-political structures and processes from a perspective that is derived from the biological sciences.

In "The Birth of Social Medicine" the notion of biopolitics is loosely defined, in terms of a political strategy for accomplishing "[s]ociety's control over individuals" (Foucault, 2000b, p.137) throughout the intensive medicalization process that took place in Western societies starting with the 18th century; that is, for "the integration and improvement of health, health services, and health consumption in the economic development of privileged societies" (Foucault, 2000b, p. 135). In this short genealogical account on the medicalization process, Foucault locates three stages in the formation of social medicine. First, the social medicine emerged at the beginning of 18th century in Germany as *state medicine* which was an integral part of *Staatswissenschaft* (science of the state). What was at stake was the maximization of the state's strength through the improvement of the public health. Foucault locates the second development in the social medicine in the late 18th century France, at that time in terms of *urban medicine*. This time it was less a matter of directly strengthening the state, but more of an attempt for maintaining the livelihood of urban centers which gradually became important hubs for national and international trade. When it comes to the third phase, it is the *labor force medicine* that first appeared in the context of 19th century England. It was no longer primarily a matter of strengthening the state or sanitizing the urban centers but that of an attempt for establishing control over the ever-growing working class. What distinguished it from the first two iterations is the following:

> The English system of Simon and his successors enabled three things to be established: medical assistance of the poor, control of the health of the labor force, and a general surveying of public health, whereby the wealthy classes would be protected from the greatest dangers. Further— and this is where its originality lies— it enabled the creation of three superimposed and coexisting medical systems: a welfare medicine designed for the poorest people; an

> administrative medicine responsible for general problems such as vaccination, epidemics, and so on; and a private medicine benefiting those who could afford it. (Foucault, 2000b, p. 155)

What seems to me as interesting is that we could point to a move from the solely medical aspects to that of the administration of the population in its entirety in Foucault's account on the British model.

When we come to the year 1976, we encounter a more detailed account of biopolitics in *The Will to Knowledge* (Foucault, 1978) and *Society Must Be Defended* (Foucault, 2003). Here, the concept of biopolitics designates a reconfiguration that has taken place in the order of politics, or more accurately a historical shift that has situated biological life at the center of the relations of power and political strategies in Western societies beginning from the late 18th century. So, one could argue that, throughout these texts, biopolitics appears to be a broader theoretical framework, a catch-all term which refers to full-scale transformation that has taken place, not solely limited to the medicalization of society. The notion of biopolitics and the transformation that it implies could be understood from two interrelated perspectives. First, for Foucault, it is related to the practical aspect: The notion of biopolitics implies the emergence of implementation of novel political techniques and procedures, and the emergence of novel institutional practices that aimed to produce regularizing and normalizing effects all over the society on the basis of the basic biological features of the human species: These new techniques and procedures were surely operating in line with the developments in medicine, and they were deployed for primarily dealing with problems generated by births, mortality, life expectancy, longevity, epidemics, and so on. Nonetheless the notion of biopolitics was not solely discussed in terms of medicalization of society, it was concerned with life in general. It included regulatory mechanisms and systems such as the implementation of

welfare funds, insurance systems, old-age pensions, or housing, and normalizing institutional practices that aimed to interfere in sexuality, mental health, delinquency, and so on.

Second, the notion of biopolitics also implies the birth of a new political rationality that is at work behind the operationality of these multiform practices, a political rationality which takes the administration of life as its primary goal, that is "to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order" (Foucault, 1978, p. 138), and the population as its privileged object. What is at stake here for Foucault is the transition to a new form of political rationality that is fairly different than those preexisting traditional forms. Most importantly, the rationality at work in the making of biopolitical regimes became less involved in producing its desired effects by way of dealing with a political subject who was more or less endowed with his or her rights, but that of deploying multiform tactics and strategies for regulating and governing "man-as-living-being" (Foucault, 2003, p. 242) which suddenly entered right into the socio-political scene. Such a shift marks the demise of the juridical rationality that had been holding its integrity for quite a long time. However, this does not mean that law is insignificant:

> I do not mean to say that the law fades into the background or that the institutions of justice tend to disappear, but rather that the law operates more and more as a norm, and that the judicial institution is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative, and so on) whose functions are for the most part regulatory. (Foucault, 1978, p. 144)

In other words, "(t)he norm, then, is opposed not to law itself but to what Foucault would call "the juridical": the institution of law as the expression of a sovereign's power" (Ewald, 1990, p. 138). Indeed, the deployment of the regulatory techniques of *biopower* may more than anything else require the legal framework.

So then, what we have, on the one hand, is the emergence of a set of techniques and procedures that have regularizing effects on the population, and on the other hand, a new form of political rationality that is at work. The advent of the biopolitical regimes is no other than the gradual passage from those political systems that was established around the monarchical institutions and the personage of the sovereign to those that went in parallel to the development of capitalism and the emergence of the modern political systems. Even to the extent that emergence of biopolitics marks the threshold of modernity as Foucault puts it. We could conveniently argue that the said transformation involves a radical change in the configuration of the socio-political context nearly in its entirety. However, in order to get the true extent of what the notion of biopolitics implies, we should discuss how the emergence of these new set of techniques and political rationality correspond to a change from the perspective of modalities of relations of power.

2.3.3 Biopower

Biopower is the way in which biopolitics is deployed to work in a given society, and, for Foucault, it is "a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavours to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations." (Foucault, 1978, p. 137) However, this is an overly simplistic definition, and I should elaborate more on how this very modality of power fits in Foucault's theoretical framework. In the transition from the traditional model of sovereignity to that of political systems built upon the strategies and procedures that are based on the exercise of power over life, Foucault distinguishes two fields of deployment of biopolitics: First is the disciplinarization of bodies, and second is the regularization of populations. What we have from the perspective of

power is the transition from power of sovereignty to that of biopower. For Foucault, while the former stands as "negative, repressive, punitive, prohibitive, and enunciated through the law, the latter is productive, generative, disciplinary, regularizing, normalizing, decentered, capillary, heterogeneous, and polymorphous" (Mendieta, 2014, p. 144).

For Foucault, this new regime or modality of relations of power emerged approximately in the second half of the 18th century as the outcome of the politico-historical transformations that the European continent had faced. The increase of industrial and agricultural production, developing scientific knowledge, especially the growing medical knowledge of the human body, which was followed by a substantial growth in the population were surely among the important causal factors behind the emergence of this modality of power. However, perhaps the most important one was the emergence of capitalism as the dominant mode of production: For Foucault, more than anything else this new mode of production, capitalism, needed two things: (1) productivity at the level of individual bodies and (2) a degree of calculability at the level of populations. Indeed, the technological and scientific innovations made "a relative control over life" (Foucault, 1978, p. 142) possible, and more importantly "methods of power and knowledge assumed responsibility for the life processes and undertook to control and modify them" (Foucault, 1978, p. 142). The apparatuses and mechanisms belonging to the existing regimes of power were to a great extent rendered obsolete in the face of these developments. It was the crisis of the traditional models that operate on the basis of the exercise of sovereign power, and if the State would guarantee its future, a transformation was necessary. To be more specific, for Foucault, there was a clear insufficiency regarding the way power was exercised in the classical models of sovereignty for fulfilling the urgent demands

that were imposed by these new necessities and needs. Indeed, for Foucault, sovereign power had more or less operated as "a subtraction mechanism, a right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods and services, labor and blood" (Foucault, 1978, p. 136) and operated on the basis of wielding the absolute right for ruling over a specified territory. However, mechanisms of deduction and control over a territory were quite inadequate on their own. At best these two were among the other variables that are needed "to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering" (Foucault, 1978, p. 136). That means, there is something that exceeds the reach of the sovereign power when it is exercised on its own, and what is unattainable is no other than a capacity for administration of life. How does biopower succeed in fulfilling such a demand?

I should start with biopower's privileged object of exercise, the population. This specific aspect stands as one of the cornerstones of Foucault's conceptualization of biopower:

> One of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of "population" as an economic and political problem: population as wealth, population as manpower or labor capacity, population balanced between its own growth and the resources it commanded. Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a "people," but with a "population," with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation. (Foucault, 1978, p. 25)

This very concern over population leads us to the mechanisms and procedures through which biopower is exercised. To be more precise, exercise of biopower directly aims for the administration of the well-being of the population, and in order to achieve the optimal outcomes for the population, it strives to attain an equilibrium

or a state of *homeostasis*[10]. That means, biopower has primarily been a regulative technology of power, and it is highly important to mention here that, for Foucault, biopower does not operate and pursue its goals on the level of the individual body, but it is exercised precisely on the level of the population and its aim is to enhance the overall well-being of it. It is equally important to mention that biopower does not mean a diffusion of the disciplinary technologies to the whole social fabric. For this very reason, exercise of biopower depends on techniques and procedures different than disciplinary technologies of power[11]. But, at the same time, we should keep in mind that, the relation between these two modalities of the exercise of power are not mutually exclusive; indeed, they greatly implement each other:

> Now I think we see something new emerging in the second half of the eighteenth century: a new technology of power, but this time it is not disciplinary. This technology of power does not exclude the former, does not exclude disciplinary technology, but it does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques. This new technique does not simply do away with the disciplinary technique, because it exists at a different level, on a different scale, and because it has a different bearing area, and makes use of very different instruments. (Foucault, 2003, p. 242)

Unlike disciplinary power's tremendous urge for reshaping the individual body and integrating it into a more or less coherent mechanisms, which in the end targets at attaining efficiency by way of making the body "more obedient as it becomes more useful" (Foucault, 1979, p. 138), biopower does not attend at the level of the individual body; its privileged object is the molar and composite body of the population. If the disciplinary technologies of power have operated on the basis of "anatomo-politics of the human body", the exercise of biopower rests on the

[10] Homeostasis is the stable state of an organism, and it refers to the conditions for its optimal functioning.

[11] In a very brief way, for Foucault: "The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely." (Foucault, 1979, pp. 137–138)

"biopolitics of the population", and they constitute two sets of series that complement each other; "the body-organism-discipline-institutions series, and the population-biological processes-regulatory mechanisms-State" (Foucault, 2003, p. 250).

For Foucault, the exercise of biopower was first inscribed in the mechanisms of the newly-born modern state, or more precisely in its policing activities[12]:

> It seems to me that one of the basic phenomena of the nineteenth century was what might be called power's hold over life. What I mean is the acquisition of power over man insofar as man is a living being, that the biological came under State control, that there was at least a certain tendency that leads to what might be termed State control of the biological. (Foucault, 2003, p. 239)

Indeed, we could locate the operationality of biopower in the various forms of state policing: Policing of health (The Birth of Social Medicine), policing of families (Donzelot, 1979), the institution of the police itself, and so on. With the emergence of biopower, the way power is to be exercised more and more relies on the implementation of regulatory techniques and procedures which aim to control the circuits and flows that run across the population:

> [A] set of processes such as the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population, and so on. It is these processes—the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity, and so on—together with a whole series of related economic and political problems… which, in the second half of the eighteenth century, become biopolitics' first objects of knowledge and the targets it seeks to control. (Foucault, 2003, p. 243).

As a concluding remark, we could define biopower as a modality of power that targets to establish and maintain control over the population on the basis of its basic biological features. Or, we might put it in terms of the modality of relations of power that goes side by side with the increasing tendency of the State control over "living man, man-as-living-being". What needs to be highlighted is the power's hold over

[12] Surely, this does not mean that the exercise of biopower could be completely reduced to the inner workings of the modern state.

life and the emergence of life as the privileged object of political procedures and strategies.

2.3.4 From right to kill to the power to foster life

Perhaps the most important and controversial claim that Foucault makes while he formulates his concept of biopower is the intriguing relationship that is posited between life and death under this regime, or modality of relations of power. The emergence of biopolitics, this very change in the dominant characteristic of the regime of power, implies a radical transition from the logic that governs the sovereign power regarding the relationship between life and death. Foucault explains this transition in the following formula: A change from the right to take life or let live to power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death. Surely, such a claim is a bold one and requires a closer inspection. To this end, I will try to give an account of such a claim by way of analyzing each of its constituent parts.

2.3.4.1 The right to kill

I would like to start with the first part of this very formulation. In what manner should one understand the correlation between sovereign power and "the right to take life or let live"? For Foucault, one of the most important characteristics that defines the exercise of sovereign power is that of *the right of life and death* that could be traced as far as to the ancient Roman familial law, *patria potestas*.[13] Surely, for Foucault, the patria potestas was an absolute form; the right to dispose of the life was not exercised occasionally or indefinitely; most commonly it was exercised when the

[13] Patria potestas is the paternal power. It is exercised by the head of the family, occasionally the father, over his subjects, and reflects his absolute authority, even to the extent of capital punishment: The father was seen as the source of the life of his children and slaves, so he had the right of disposing their lives when it is necessary.

sovereign's very existence was threatened either by external or internal enemies. I had said the right of life and death; but, what is important here is that, for Foucault, the sovereign power was actually a power that operated through its capacity for inflicting death. There was an asymmetry between the sovereign's capacity for fostering life and inflicting death. Indeed, for Foucault, "The sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing" (Foucault, 1978, p. 136). That means, to the sovereign power there corresponds a strictly limited and relative capacity for establishing control over life. On the other hand, when it comes to the capacity for taking the life away, the exercise of sovereign power consists of a large repertoire of specialized techniques for dismantling life: First of all, the sovereign can wage wars and demand from his subjects to expose their lives in the defense of the already existing political order. But, more significantly, the sovereign could exercise his right to kill in a more direct way when someone dares to rise up against his rule, or even when the laws he had imposed were transgressed by someone (breaking laws meant no other than the direct violation of sovereign's right). Moreover, for Foucault inflicting "death was the moment of the most obvious and most spectacular manifestation of the absolute power of the sovereign" (Foucault, 2003, p. 248). Not only it was the matter of the actual annihilation of the threat, but also it was a strategy, though a strategy that had highly unpredictable ends, which in the end what made the whole system sustain itself. When it comes to the power of life, the sovereign did not have the same capacity for fostering life; indeed, his power could only be exercised as a mechanism of deduction. All could be done is that of granting life, in other words, actually not so much than letting his subjects to continue their lives.

2.3.4.2 Power to foster life

When we come to the second part of the formula, namely "power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death", we are in the theoretical terrain of biopolitics or biopower. As we discussed earlier, in Foucault's conceptual framework, the operationality of biopower consists of techniques and procedures that aim at sustaining and multiplying life at the level of population, or to be more precise, what is at stake here are those strategies that aim at the enhancement of the biological existence of the human race. So then, one could easily understand what the phrase of "fostering life" implies. But, perhaps the most radical change is related to the role that is played by the death: The highest function of the exercise of power no longer involves the capacity for killing as it did in the power of sovereignty; it is indeed the exact opposite: As biopower thoroughly invests in life in order to attain its goals, that is, establishing and maintaining the control over life by way of regularizing it, the role that is played by death has to change tremendously. In fact, this shift, for Foucault, implies a radical change in the way the phenomenon of death is to be handled in modern political regimes:

> Now that power is decreasingly the power of the right to take life, and increasingly the right to intervene to make live, or once power begins to intervene mainly at this level in order to improve life by eliminating accidents, the random element, and deficiencies, death becomes, insofar as it is the end of life, the term, the limit, or the end of power too. Death is outside the power relationship. (Foucault, 2003, p. 248)

So, what should we understand from the claim that the operationality of biopower death constitutes the absolute limit for the exercise of power? Does that mean that once and for all death is erased from the domain of the relations of power, or from politics in general? If not, how one should make a sense of the role of the phenomenon of death in the making of biopolitical regimes?

2.3.4.3 Function of death in biopolitical regimes

Surely, what Foucault meant should not be understood to suggest the erasure of death from the scene of politics. While this new configuration of the relationship between life and death stands as the exact opposite of the right of life and death that is inscribed in the old sovereign power, we should not be mistaken that death leaves the scene once and for all. Indeed, the relationship between biopolitics and death remains to be a highly controversial issue. So, we should approach this issue in an extremely attentive manner. First, we should understand that the advent of biopolitical regimes has meant "a relative control over life averted some of the imminent risks of death" (Foucault, 1978, p. 142). To say at least, this holds true for the Western world: Most notably the developments in medicine to a great extent improve the conditions of life, for example dying from an epidemic has been less likely especially from the 19th century. We could also easily understand such a claim from the procedures of punishment especially if we consider the fact that the public ritualizations of death has gradually faded away, and the capital punishment is no longer the primary option. But, there also appears a problem, a very serious problem, the problem of death in the biopolitical regimes:

> It wields its power over living beings as living beings, and its politics, therefore, has to be a biopolitics. Since the population is nothing more than what the state takes care of for its own sake, of course, the state is entitled to slaughter it, if necessary. So the reverse of biopolitics is thanatopolitics. (Foucault, 2000c, p. 416)

As we all know, the 20th century has witnessed maybe the most brutal political regimes, ranging from Nazism to that of Khmer Rouge rule. But, before those totalitarian regimes there was also the case of colonialism and the problem posed by

wars[14], which "were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century" (Foucault, 1978, p. 136). Indeed, Foucault were perfectly aware of this difficulty, when in *Society Must Be Defended*, he formulated the notion of state racism. State racism, for Foucault, was the dark side of biopolitics, and it functioned in terms of distinguishing between "what must live and what must die" (Foucault, 2003, p. 254). That means it was the genocidal tendency at work in the cases of ethnic cleansings that occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries as a strategy for maintaining and enhancing the wellbeing of the population by way of putting it to a racial purification. What is more controversial is that Foucault remarks that (state) racism could not be attributed solely to the extreme cases such as Nazism or Stalinism, but it was inscribed in the mechanisms of the modern state in varying degrees, that it was a part of modern politics.

While the concept of state racism could be seen as a successful attempt for explicating some of the exigencies I have just mentioned, it seems to me as a temporary or partial solution. Or to be more precise, this notion does nothing other than amplifying the problematic that death function brings in biopolitical regimes: As we discussed, in the Foucauldian theoretical framework, the capacity for inflicting death was inscribed in the power of sovereignty, and what defined biopolitics or biopower was that of the improvement of life by way of its regularization and normalization. However, we did not discuss the terms of this transition. Should this transition be understood in terms of a radical break that consists of a successive series through which biopower completely replaces the sovereign power? Or, should we understand that sovereign power was complemented by biopower as well as

[14] It is important to note that there was considerable difference between how the war functions in traditional regimes built around the edifice of sovereignty and biopolitics respectfully. Wars no longer are waged in defense of the sovereign but in defense of everyone, that means the population.

penetrated and permeated by it, consequently what has changed was the dominant characteristic of the overall regime of power? As Roberto Esposito succinctly puts it, Foucault does not make a final decision, and he seems to be oscillating between these opposite positions, which Esposito calls the former as “discontinuist hypothesis”, and the latter as “continuist hypothesis”:

> [I]f the thesis of indistinction between sovereignty, biopolitics, and totalitarianism were to prevail −the continuist hypothesis− he would be forced to assume genocide as the constituitive paradigm (or at least as the inevitable outcome) of the entire parabola of modernity. Doing so would contrast with his sense of historical distinctions, which is always keen. If instead the hypothesis of difference were to prevail −the discontinuist hypothesis− his conception of biopower would be invalidated every time that death is projected inside the circle of life, not only during the first half of the 1900s, but also after. (Esposito, 2008, p. 43)

So, this stands to be the most controversial aspect of the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics. At this time, we will not proceed further on this very issue. However, as we will see in the fourth chapter, I will try to provide a more detailed account on the relationship between the issues of sovereignty and violence topically through Agamben’s account.

2.4 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have briefly discussed what the notion of biopolitics implies and how it functions in Foucault’s theoretical framework: A reconfiguration that has taken place in the order of politics, or more accurately a historical shift that has situated biological life at the center of the relations of power and political strategies in Western societies beginning from the late 18th century which operated via techniques and procedures of the newly born modern State which have regularizing effects on the population. Most significantly, for Foucault, to conceptualize the transition from the sovereignty that operated on the basis of “the

right to take life or let live" to political systems that operated on the basis of "the power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death". I have also pointed out how controversial this claim is; topically on the question of how death lingers on tormenting lives under the context of biopolitics. One can see this uncertainty in Foucault's account, whether the notion of biopolitics primarily implies a regime of power that fosters life or as a configuration of power that paves the road to the worst genocides of the history has ever seen, as a terminal flaw. However, one can also see it as an opportunity, which in the end opens up fertile grounds for diverse readings as we will take up in the following chapters.

In this chapter, I have also discussed what the Foucauldian concept of power implies: A mode of action upon action of others. That means, for Foucault, power is neither an essence, nor a substance, but primarily a specific type of relationship which only exists when it is put into action. I have also tried to give an answer to the question of what constitutes the specificity of Foucault's conceptualization of power: Not solely as an instance of repression or a relation of domination, beyond the juridical categories, and more significantly as a productive network that operates at the grassroots of the social. However, at this instance, it is crucial to mention here that what Foucault provides for us is not only an exquisite concept of power, but more importantly a highly promising perspective: A perspective from which one can analyze how various modalities of relations of power function in multiple ways and get diffused throughout social relations. At this instance, I would like to make a requisite clarification: It would be highly erroneous to understand the way Foucault has built his concept of power involves a theory of power. Indeed, Foucault explicitly remarks this issue in the following way:

> Do we need a theory of power? Since a theory assumes a prior objectification, it cannot be asserted as a basis for analytical work. But this analytical work

> cannot proceed without an ongoing conceptualization. And this conceptualization implies critical thought—a constant checking. (Foucault, 2000d, p. 327)

To be more specific, Foucault's way of conceptualization of power is an outcome of a strict methodological choice: Throughout his works Foucault ceaselessly prioritizes the perspective of relationality while he articulates his understanding of power. In other words, the methodological attitude that Foucault embraces should be understood in terms of drawing *an analytics of power* rather than building a theory of power. In other words, his perspective on the concept of power is oriented towards the analysis of "material operations, forms of subjugation, and the connections among and the uses made of the local systems of subjugation" (Foucault, 2003, p. 34). Then, one could easily infer that, from the Foucauldian perspective, the question is no longer posed in terms of "What is power?" or "Where does the origin of power lie?", but it is rather "How do relations of power operate or in which ways is power exercised?". Indeed, I have tried to stick to such a way of methodological approach in conceptualization of power and employed it as sort of a maxim while evaluating those more recent interpretations of the notion of biopolitics.

CHAPTER 3

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LIVING AND THE BIOPOLITICAL PRODUCTION

3.1 Introduction

The notion of biopolitics has been attracting a considerable interest among scholars and researchers especially since the beginning of 2000s. It is not hard to guess why this has been so, especially if we recall that the notion biopolitics implies, in Foucault's words, a configuration that "brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life" (Foucault, 1978, p. 143). Is it not also the case that the current stage of capitalism, maybe more than anything else, means the integration of life; social life, political life, biological life, in other words, life in general, to the interface populated by market relations? Is not what has been brought to the table by post-Fordist production models the erasure the demarcation line between work and life? Thus, the attempts at institutionalizing a global neoliberal regime can enable us to understand why the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics has become a theme that has been attracting a growing interest among those who want to make sense of the contemporary world.

Not very surprisingly, this chapter is also built around the notion of biopolitics, however with a substantial difference: I will attempt to interrogate to what extent the notion of biopolitics could be seen as a useful theoretical toolset that could assist us while trying to make our present intelligible, especially in explicating the dynamics of late capitalism and neoliberalism, which have been an indissociable part of our social and political settings, and also discourses, at least since the 80s.

Indeed, in the subsequent years after Michel Foucault had coined the concept of biopolitics, his studies have gravitated towards the subject matter of governmentality, and especially his account on neoliberalism has become highly influential among academic circles. Indeed, I could have quickly situated biopolitics in terms of the Foucauldian notion of (neo)liberal governmentality and move on in a similar way Thomas Lemke does in his recent works (Lemke, 2009; Lemke 2011; Lemke, 2016). Doing so would have enabled us to easily associate the notion of biopolitics with the ascent of neoliberal regimes of governance in the late 20th century, and to argue that the notion of biopolitics has found its broadest applicability in terms of neoliberalism, as the latter, more than anything else, implies the contagion of economic rationality and market relations into almost all spheres of social life. However, while such an approach could be regarded as promising at first sight, there are some serious issues it raises which I will discuss in the following pages. To be more specific, the first part of this chapter is devoted for seeking an answer to the question of to what extent it is possible to locate the notion of biopolitics in the broader theoretical framework of governmentality. In this end, I will briefly outline Foucault's conceptualization of governmentality and, then, discuss the discrepancies that could be encountered between the ways that notions of biopolitics and governmentality (especially regarding the liberal type) are formulated.

Then, I will move on to discuss one of the most influential readings of Foucauldian notion of biopolitics, one that is developed by the political philosopher Antonio Negri and the literary theorist Michael Hardt's interpretation. It would not be an overexaggerating to argue that the remarkable interest in the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics has partly been due to the success of Hardt and Negri's works. This specific reading of biopolitics has become highly influential with the

publication of Hardt and Negri's co-written books; *Empire* (Hardt & Negri, 2000), *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Hardt & Negri, 2004), and *Commonwealth* (Hardt & Negri, 2009). But, it is also important to mention here that while Hardt and Negri's writings have received a lot of attention, their way of reading the notion of biopolitics is widely shared and discussed among various scholars and independent theorists who locate themselves in the Autonomist Marxist Project. Their approach attributes a whole new set of meanings to the concept of biopolitics, and, most notably, throughout their writings biopolitics is presented in terms of the antagonistic relation between biopolitical production and biopower which corresponds to both the creative capacity of the multitude which in itself carries the possibility for post-capitalist democracy as well as the increasing tendency of control over life under the Post-Fordist models of global capitalism. The second part of this chapter is devoted to the critical reassessment of this perspective.

3.2 Biopolitics as an art of government

I would like to start with interrogating the possibility for situating the notion of biopolitics in the theoretical framework of governmentality. From the year 1978 onwards, the locus of Foucault's studies has gravitated towards the subject matter of governmentality. At the same time, Foucault seems to be willing to keep the concept of biopolitics. So then, would not fusing these two concepts generate a promising perspective? Such a way of reading stands as a common approach among a considerable number of commentators of Foucault's work, and perhaps the most notable one is that of Lemke's. In his "Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction" (Lemke, 2011), Lemke explicitly argues that reframing the notion of biopolitics in the broader theoretical framework of governmentality, in terms of *the government of*

the living under the context of neoliberalism, has a number of theoretical advantages. While Lemke does not give any detailed answer to the question of how this operation is to be handled, for him, such a way of reading could raise highly rich research perspectives as it enables one to pose highly important questions:

> How do liberal forms of government make use of corporeal techniques and forms of self-guidance? How do they form interests, needs, and structures of preference? How do present technologies model individuals as active and free citizens, as members of self-managing communities and organizations, as autonomous actors who are in the position—or at least should be—to rationally calculate their own life risks? In neoliberal theories, what is the relationship between the concept of the responsible and rational subject and that of human life as human capital? (Lemke, 2011, p. 50)

There is actually no reason to disagree on the importance of such questions. Indeed, to some extent, I share the most concerns of his, and such a reading may be plausible to adopt; nevertheless, there is an important question that needs to be addressed, even if one is inclined to locate biopolitics in the theoretical framework of governmentality. In what terms should we understand the transition from biopolitics to governmentality? As a radical break out of countenance of biopolitics, or as an unfinished project?

3.2.1 From biopolitics to governmentality

In the lecture he gave at College de France on 10 January 1979, Foucault himself seems to posit a close relationship between biopolitics and governmentality, especially with its liberal version and explicitly remarks that a clear analysis of biopolitics requires the understanding of (liberal) governmental reason:

> I thought I could do a course on biopolitics this year. I will try to show how the central core of all the problems that I am presently trying to identify is what is called population. But it seems to me that the analysis of biopolitics can only get under way when we have understood the general regime of this governmental reason. I have talked about, this general regime that we can call the question of truth, of economic truth in the first place, within governmental reason. Consequently, it seems to me that it is only when we understand what

> is at stake in this regime of liberalism opposed to raison d'État—or rather, fundamentally modifying [it] without, perhaps, questioning its bases—only when we know what this governmental regime called liberalism was, will we be able to grasp what biopolitics is. (Foucault, 2008, pp. 21-22)

At first sight, there seems to be a close affinity that Foucault posits between the governmental regime called liberalism and what is called as biopolitics. However, what is strange is the following: The appropriate understanding of biopolitics seems to require the understanding of the opposition between the *raison d'État* and the liberal governmental reason. This is highly strange and unusual because, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, throughout the related lecture of *Society Must Be Defended* and the last chapter of first volume of *History of Sexuality*, the notions of biopolitics and biopower are one way or another associated with the modern State's regulative and normative mechanisms, or procedures. Moreover, approximately two years later, in the course of the summary section of *Security, Territory, Population*, the lecture series which Foucault took up between the years of 1977 and 1978, after a one-year break, the notion of biopolitics is handled in the following way:

> The development in the second half of the eighteenth century of what was called *medizinische Polizei*, public hygiene, and social medicine, should be re-inserted in the general framework of a "biopolitics"; the latter aims to treat the "population" as a set of coexisting living beings with particular biological and pathological features, and which as such falls under specific forms of knowledge and technique. This "biopolitics" must itself be understood on the basis of a theme developed since the seventeenth century: the management of state forces. (Foucault, 2009, p. 367)

So, we could clearly see that the notion of biopolitics still appears to be explained in a similar way to how it was first presented in both *Society Must Be Defended* and *Will to Knowledge*, more in terms of the exercise of modern State's regulative and normative mechanisms, and procedures over the population.

But, what is more perplexing is the following: The following lecture series between 1978 and 1979 was entitled as *Birth of Biopolitics*; and it was strongly

signaled in the first lecture that the lecture series would be devoted to the subject matter of biopolitics. So, logically one might expect some further elaborations on the notion of biopolitics, especially why it is to be better understood by way of analysis of the opposition between the raison d'État and the governmental regime called liberalism. But, the discussion on the notion of biopolitics appears to be only limited to the first lecture, and more surprisingly throughout the lectures of the *Birth of Biopolitics*, the term "biopolitics" is enunciated for two more times, and none of them involves any detailed discussion. What is more confusing is that, as far as to my knowledge, the specific instance on 10 January 1979 appears to be as one of the last times Foucault visits the notion of biopolitics. On the other hand, beginning from the year 1977, with *Security, Territory, Population* Foucault's attention gravitates more to the notion of governmentality, and it seems that both notions of biopolitics and biopower are somehow abandoned. In Michel Senellart's words, who wrote the "Course Context" of *Security, Territory, Population*, "the question of biopower to that of government, to such an extent that in the end the latter almost entirely eclipses the former." (Foucault, 2009, p.370) So then, how shall we make sense of this shift of emphasis? Some of the commentators of Foucault's work, most notably Lemke, seem to be ignoring this circumstance and tend to locate the notion of biopolitics in the broader theoretical framework that is generated by governmentality. Still, for some others, most recently and explicitly in Marcelo Hoffman's *Foucault and Power: The Influence of Political Engagement on Theories of Power* (Hoffman, 2014), this shift implies a far more serious distinction between biopolitics and governmentality. For Hoffman, this serious distinction is highly related to the different ways in which the notion of population is to be handled:

> Foucault's relationship to the concept of biopolitics experienced something far more radical, something belonging to the order of a rupture or break rather

> than of a shift or displacement. A stark limitation to this concept arose from its reference to a population as a mere object of biopolitical regulations rather than as a subject-object of these regulations. This rendering of population posed a major, if unstated, problem because it implied that biopolitics fell radically short of the acute sense of the self-direction of behavior that distinguished Foucault's thinking about power in general… (Hoffman, 2014, p. 94)

In order to evaluate to what extent such a reading appears viable, I will briefly introduce the notion of governmentality and interrogate the ways the notion of biopolitics could be thought as an integral part of it, or not.

From Foucault's perspective, the notion of governmentality stands to be formulated in the following way:

> [B]y "governmentality" I understand the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument. (Foucault, 2009, p. 108).

What we have here are the three categories that constitute the main pillars of the notion of governmentality: Population, political economy, and lastly, apparatuses of security. In fact, all of these three aspects are somehow addressed in Foucault's previous formulations of the concept of biopolitics: There is no need to speak of the population as the target for the exercise of power, it is by now apparent. When we come to the political economy as the major form knowledge, while political economy was not explicitly remarked in previous texts, we could infer its role if we consider the urge for attaining calculability on the level of the population, and, more importantly, the themes such as equilibrium or homeostasis in biopower's operational logic. Lastly, the notion of security also seems to be loosely inscribed in the operationality of biopolitics, since the exercise of biopower implies the protection of life as well the improvement of its general conditions. So then, what are the points of divergence in these accounts of biopolitics and governmentality? In order to

answer this question, I will introduce two distinct ways of governance that is located in Foucault's theoretical framework: First is the governmental model that correlates with the raison d'Éta*t* and the apparatus of police, and second is the one that correlates with the liberal governmentality.[15]

3.2.2 The raison d'État and the apparatus of police

If we translate from French, the exact translation of raison d'État is the reason of state. For Foucault, the concept (with the theory of the police) designates a modality of an "art of government" that has emerged in the political context of the Western societies starting from the mid-sixteenth century. While raison d'État might sound as something related to the sovereignty of the state, for Foucault it clearly is not. Indeed, Foucault situates the emergence of the theories of raison d'État in the general problem of government that has emerged in almost all social spheres during this time period: Government of the self, government of souls, government of children, and so

[15] While I will be focusing on these two ways of governance, there is also the third model of governmentality: The model of pastorship. In Foucault's works, the concept of pastoral power refers to the individualizing power that is exercised in the model of pastorship. So then, what is pastorship is the political or social arrangement modelled similar to that of the relationship between a shepherd and his flock of sheep. Role of the pastoral power in a given community is constantly caring, ensuring, sustaining and improving the lives of its members. The characteristics of the pastoral modality of power could be explained in the following way: Firstly, the shepherd or the pastor exercises power over his flock rather than over the land. Secondly, the object or target is not the population in its entirety; pastoral power implies individual attention paid to each member. In other words, it is the individualizing power. Lastly, pastorship implies the salvation of the flock and the devotedness of the shepherd. Following Foucault's account, the pastorship as a social model was not a familiar one for Ancient Greek or Roman political context but it was active in Ancient Near East civilizations (Egypt, Assyria, Judaea) in which the understanding of the king, or the leader as the *shepherd of men* had been a common theme. As Abrahamic religions – which have very strong pastoral themes in their formation− have spread so did the model of pastorship. However, through the middle ages the theme of pastorship became less visible in the European continent. This was partly related to the fact that, pastorship was a complicated technique to maintain. It was mostly possible through an urban context, and it required a certain level of culture not just regarding the pastor but also regarding his flock. So, it was difficult for the pastoral model of power to be maintained through the extremely poor and extensive rural economy of the Medieval context. And from the socio-political perspective, the emergence of feudalism which presupposed intrapersonal bonds of a different type than pastorship, hindered pastoral model of power as an effective, practical government of men. Surely pastorship did not cease to exist completely but remained limited to certain religious communities or monasteries. Foucault argues that the individualizing power of pastorship combined with its opposite, the state in the 16th century and is revived in the discourses of governmentality.

on. In a very brief way, the concept of raison d'État designates the governmentalization of the State or "principles capable of guiding an actual government" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 315). For Foucault, theories of raison d'État differ substantially from those juridical theories of sovereignty, or from *theories of the prince*. First, it differs from those juridical theories of sovereignty as it is not formulated within the juridical domain and is not found on the basis of "divine, natural, or human laws" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 317); the central problem is the governance of the State, or more precisely the maximization of the State's strength as well as ensuring its preservation. At the same time, the theories of *raison d'État* imply a break with those theories of the prince, "[t]he aim of such an art of governing is precisely not to reinforce the power a prince can wield over his domain: its aim is to reinforce the state itself" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 317). This brings us to the question of what we should understand from the goal of the reinforcement of the State, which those theorists of raison d'État insisted on.

According to Foucault, the objective of the reinforcement of the State's strength implies the attainment of two interrelated things: First, it is related to the reinforcing of the State's position in the competition among other rival states. This requires the invention of a competent "military-diplomatic apparatus" (Foucault, 2009, p. 296) and technology. Second, the task of reinforcing the State implies the need for establishing and maintaining the internal order by way of augmenting the welfare of its citizens, and this is the exact point that "the apparatus of police" (Foucault, 2009, p. 296) steps in. But, we should not be mistaken that what is implied here by the term of "police" is the law enforcement forces as we are inclined to understand it nowadays. The term, "police", throughout the writings dating to the 16th and 17th centuries, had meant the "technology of state forces" which was

responsible for maintaining the internal order and ensuring the development of state's forces as Foucault puts it. By way of visiting Louis Turquet de Mayerne's *La Monarchie aristodémocratique, ou le Gouvernement composé et meslé des trois formes de legitimes Republiques*, Foucault brings out this extremely interesting account of what the notion of police implies:

> The police includes everything. But from an extremely particular point of view. Men and things are envisioned as to their relationships: men's coexistence on a territory; their relationships as to property; what they produce; what is exchanged on the market. It also considers how they live, the diseases and accidents that can befall them. What the police sees to is a live, active, productive man. Turquet employs a remarkable expression: "The police's true object is man." (Foucault, 2000a, p. 319)

In a very brief manner, we could formulate that Foucault defines the operationality of the police in the following way: The apparatus and technology of police implies the rational arrangement of the circulation of things and, more importantly, the rational government of human beings in the broadest sense in a designated *milieu*, that is, the borders that a given state extends.

So then, what we have right now is a model of governmentality that operates on the basis of the raison d'État coupled with the apparatus and technology of police. The distinctive characteristic of this model is the governmentalization of the State. However, it is also important to mention that, for Foucault, the governmentalization of the State at the same time means the statification[16] (étatisation) of almost all of the institutions that run across through a given society. That means, various problems

[16] It is extremely crucial to highlight that, for Foucault, such a process does not implicate that state's complete takeover of the society. Neither it is a claim for anchoring the relations of power to the mechanism of state. Indeed, for Foucault, what needs to be avoided at all cost is no other than conceptualizing "power as dependent on the state apparatus" (Foucault, 2000e, p. 122). In other words, what is at stake here is not designating the State as the primary source which power emanates. On the other hand, for Foucault, relations of power predate the state, and the state is an effect of relations of power or, if we put in a different way, state is a meta-power: "[T]he state can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations. The State is superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality, the family, kinship, knowledge, technology and so forth" (Foucault, 2000e, p. 123)

that could be encountered in a given society, such as healthcare, education, or economy, are to be dealt with on the basis of the rationality which in the end aims at the maximization of the forces of the State. So, we should ask, what is the mode of operation of this art of government that is so preoccupied with amplifying the forces of the state? For Foucault, the key term here is regulation: "The state is the regulatory idea of governmental reason" (Foucault, 2009, p. 286). And, this specific type of art of government primarily operates on the basis of the exercise of regulatory procedures and techniques that aim to arrange the circulation of things and the government of populations in a rational way. What is important for us is how population appears as the primary field of application for this mode of governmentality. At this instance, we could easily see the close proximity between the way that the notion of biopolitics and biopower were formulated throughout Foucault's works dating to 1976 and the analysis of this mode of art of government, the raison d'État, coupled with the apparatus and technology of police, especially if we consider the common element, the status of population as the object of exercise for regulatory techniques and procedures of the newly born modern State.

3.2.3 Liberal governmentality

When we come to the liberal art of government which has culminated in the 18th century political thought in the context of Europe, Foucault suggests that there exists an opposition between this new model of government, 18th century liberalism, or what might be called as classical liberalism, and the one that had operated on the basis of raison d'État. So, how shall we understand the terms through which this liberal regime of government was in opposition to the former model? First, for Foucault, while the liberal art of government shared the general framework of the

raison d'État to a great extent, that of the State's enrichment, the central problem was no longer posed in terms of the maximization of the State's power at any costs. What this new art of government, liberalism, had brought was that of a new ratio: Achieving the maximum results by way of the least government possible. We could understand this new ratio better in terms of maximization of efficiency.

Of course, it was not that a group of people who identified themselves as liberals had emerged from nowhere and opposed the already existing governmental models. Indeed, it was just the opposite, liberalism for Foucault emerged as something like an immanent critique that flourished within the field of raison d'État. Or, if put it in more precise terms, it was a "point of inflection in the curve of its development" (Foucault, 2008, p. 28) in the face of the emergence of the reality of the ever-expanding market and capitalism. And the most crucial precondition for maintaining and if possible amplifying the strength of the state under such circumstances was to establish a strong economy. At this point, I should also highlight the crucial role that is played by political economy. For Foucault, up until the 18th century market was a site "invested with extremely prolific and strict regulations" (Foucault, 2008, p. 30) as it was indeed thought as a site of justice.

> Was it the truth of prices, as we would say now? Not at all. What had to be ensured was the absence of fraud. In other words, it was the protection of the buyer. The aim of the regulation of the market was, on the one hand, a distribution of goods that was as just as possible, and then, on the other hand, the absence of theft and crime. . . . The buyer had to be protected against the danger of bad goods and the fraud of the person selling them. It was necessary then to ensure the absence of fraud with regard to the nature of the objects, their quality, and so forth. This system—regulation, the just price, the sanction of fraud—thus meant that the market was essentially, and really functioned as, a site of justice, a place where what had to appear in exchange and be formulated in the price was justice. (Foucault, 2008, pp. 30-31)

What has changed in the 18th century was this status that was attributed to the market. Especially with the emergence of the political economy as a mature

discipline, market was no longer thought primarily as a site of justice or jurisdiction; it was presented as a *natural phenomenon*. From the lens of 18th century liberal economists (Adam Smith and others), the market had its own rules and mechanisms, and a healthy market operated on the basis of them without the need of any external intervention. The market was thought to be self-sufficient, regulating itself by its inner mechanisms. For example, it was no longer a matter of assigning just prices, what was at stake now was to allow for the natural prices to find their competitive ways, which was in turn determined on the basis of the relationship between the cost of production and the extent of demand. If the accumulation of wealth was set as a target to be attained, for 18th century liberal political economists, a self-limitation of governmental practice, especially on the domain of the market, rendered itself as necessary. So, that it is the well-known dictum of liberalism, *laissez faire laissez passer*[17] that we are speaking of. If we briefly conclude, what characterized classical liberalism for Foucault was its attempt to "contrive a free space of the market within an already given political society" (Foucault, 2008, p. 131).

So far so good, but does that mean in the end, that liberal governmentality means less government? If not, we should ask what does it mean to govern for the political rationality at work in liberalism, and what are the techniques and procedures that are to be utilized? Does this model operate by way of deploying regulatory techniques and procedures on the population as it had been in the case of the models of government that correlated with the raison d'État and the police? If we stick to Foucault's perspective, we could clearly understand that this is less of a matter of implementing the principle of least government and more of the emergence of a

[17] It is also very interesting how Foucault interprets it: "The game of liberalism—not interfering, allowing free movement, letting things follow their course; laisser faire, passer et aller—basically and fundamentally means acting so that reality develops, goes its way, and follows its own course according to the laws, principles, and mechanisms of reality itself." (Foucault, 2009, p. 48)

radically different kind of governmentality.[18] In order to answer these questions in an appropriate way, I need to introduce a highly important Foucauldian concept into the discussion, the notion of security.

If we take a look at Foucault's work, especially to the *Security, Territory, Population*, the notion of security is given to us in terms of a set of governmental techniques and procedures, and it would be more appropriate to call it the mechanisms or apparatuses of security from then on. In order to give an account of how these mechanisms or apparatuses of security operate, I want to pose a couple of questions and try to answer them. First of all, I should start by asking whose security that is implied here? For Foucault, it is no longer the security of the sovereign and the integrity of the territory he ruled. It was the population and those who governed it that were to be protected (Foucault, 2009, p. 65) from any kind of contingencies, risks, or dangers. That means, for Foucault, apparatuses of security operate on the basis of probability and risk calculations. But, is not maintaining security an essential part of every political system including the models of sovereignty? While the notion security and its various ways of application predate what Foucault calls (liberal) governmentality, we should highlight the very characteristic form it has taken since

[18] Especially with the advent of American neoliberalism in the late 20th century, as Foucault carefully locates, the governmental practice that correlates especially with the neoliberal political reason was no longer confined to imposing limits on states' actions over the markets which, in the end, was presented as a separate domain for classical liberals. On the contrary, neoliberal government meant to be exercised on the basis of the rationality of the market. In Foucault's words:

> The problem of neo-liberalism is rather how the overall exercise of political power can be modeled on the principles of a market economy. So it is not a question of freeing an empty space, but of taking the formal principles of a market economy and referring and relating them to, of projecting them on to a general art of government. (Foucault, 2008, p. 131)

In short, this means the introduction of economic rationality right into the political realm and the contagion of rationality of the market to almost all spheres of the social. For a more recent Foucauldian analysis of neoliberalism, Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval's *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society* (Dardot & Laval, 2013). For further reading: See, also Fikret Adaman and Yahya M. Madra's "Neoliberal Reason and Its Forms: De-Politicization Through Economization" (Adaman & Madra, 2013).

the emergence of 18th century liberal art of government. If we quote directly from *Security, Territory, Population*:

> These mechanisms do not tend to a nullification of phenomena in the form of the prohibition, 'you will not do this,' nor even, 'this will not happen,' but in the form of a progressive self-cancellation of phenomena by the phenomena themselves. (Foucault, 2009, p. 66)

This very phrase, "a progressive self-cancellation of phenomena by the phenomena themselves", is the very characteristic that distinguishes what Foucault calls as apparatuses of security from the regulatory techniques and procedures of the raison d'État, prescriptive nature of disciplinary technologies, and lastly from the juridical mechanisms of sovereignty. What is at stake here is a substantially different governmental rationality and, more importantly, a modality of exercise of relations of power[19].

In what terms shall we understand the phrase, "a progressive self-cancellation of phenomena by the phenomena themselves"? First, one could argue that the governmental practice that is implied here may be better understood in terms of Foucault's idea of *conduct of conducts*. At this point, let us recall one important aspect of Foucault's conceptualization of power: For Foucault, power operates by opening "a whole field of possibilities" for the one whom power is to be exercised upon (Foucault, 2000d, p. 341). So then, what (liberal) governmentality involves is the management of these possibilities. In fact, understanding the operationality of apparatuses of security in terms of conduct of conducts brings out a very interesting problematic: the problematic of freedom. Surely, what I am talking about here (and neither is Foucault) is not the extremely banal and boring opposition that is posited between the notions of security and freedom. Indeed, for Foucault:

[19] If we recall our previous discussion on how Foucault has conceptualized his notion of power, we could notice the close proximity between the exercise of power in the modern contexts and the model of government that we are talking about.

> An apparatus of security . . . cannot operate well except on condition that it is given freedom, in the modern sense [the word] acquires in the eighteenth century: no longer the exemptions and privileges attached to a person, but the possibility of movement, change of place, and processes of circulation of both people and things. I think it is this freedom of circulation, in the broad sense of the term, it is in terms of this option of circulation, that we should understand the word freedom, and understand it as one of the facets, aspects, or dimensions of the deployment of apparatuses of security. (Foucault, 2009, pp. 48-49)

And second, we should mention that, for Foucault, the liberal art of governing implies the "rationalization of the art of government on the rational behavior of those who are governed" (Foucault, 2008, p. 312). That means, what we have right now is a substantially different modality of governance that no longer operates by way of deploying regulatory techniques and procedures on the level of populations as it was the case in the formulation of the notion of biopolitics. To be more precise, if we could characterize the operationality of biopower in terms of the interference on the natural processes at the level of population in order to make them conform with the regulatory norm, with the formulation of mechanisms of security what is at stake is a model of governance that takes the naturalness of the population as its very norm. That is to say, what Foucault sees in liberal art of government is the very tendency for "adjusting an optimal middle within a spectrum of variations" (Lemke, 2011, p. 47) by way of making modifications in the variables of the environment, rather than designating some concrete norms which the individuals are expected to adhere.

Indeed, at this point, taking a look at how Foucault has given an account of neoliberalism might be helpful to us for understanding how the operationality of liberal art of government is formulated in a fairly different way than "the regulatory idea of governmental reason" (Foucault, 2009, p. 286), in other words, from the governmental model on the basis of the correlation between the raison d'État and the apparatus of police. While I will not be able to draw an in-detail picture of Foucault's

analysis of neoliberalism, I would like to highlight a highly crucial aspect of his account; his interpretation of the figure of *homo economicus*. In the briefest way possible, for Foucault, homo economicus stands to be formulated in the following way:

> *Homo economicus* is someone who pursues his own interest, and whose interest is such that it converges spontaneously with the interest of others. From the point of view of a theory of government, *homo economicus* is the person who must be let alone. With regard to *homo economicus*, one must *laisser-faire*; he is the subject or object of *laissez-faire*. And now, in Becker's definition which I have just given, *homo economicus*, that is to say, the person who accepts reality or who responds systematically to modifications in the variables of the environment, appears precisely as someone manageable, someone who responds systematically to systematic modifications artificially introduced into the environment. *Homo economicus* is someone who is eminently governable. From being the intangible partner *of laissez-faire*, *homo economicus* now becomes the correlate of a governmentality which will act on the environment and systematically modify its variables. (Foucault, 2008, pp. 270-271)

What is significant regarding the shift in the figure of homo economicus from liberal to neoliberal governmentality is, the way it is posited by Foucault as "the surface of contact between the individual and the power exercised on him, and so the principle of the regulation of power over the individual" (Foucault, 2008, pp. 252-253), thus as the governmentalizable human being. However, it is important to mention here that in the neoliberal model the exercise of power no longer involves a regulation that is imposed externally by the state but based on the presence of self-regulated individuals who are incentivized through the competitive mechanisms of the market. Indeed, Foucault's remarks on how neoliberal theoreticians address the problem of work could be highly illustrative: As Foucault puts it, for neoliberals, the problem of work is addressed from the perspective of "the person who decides to work" (Foucault, 2008, p. 252), or in more precise terms, in regard to the notion of *human capital* rather than being formulated as a matter of labor. Very briefly speaking, what is at stake here, is the formulation of a rational agent who is endowed with the

capacity to act and be incentivized in accordance with the very principle of *human capital*. In Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval's words:

> It is the efficient, competitive individual who seeks to maximize his human capital in all areas, who not only seeks to project himself into the future and calculate his gains and losses like the old economic man, but above all seeks to work on himself so as constantly to transform himself, improve himself, and make himself ever more efficient. (Dardot & Laval, 2013, p. 294)

As I have mentioned before, from Foucault's perspective, such a figure stands as a governmentalizable human being. Then, the exercise of government is formulated on the basis of the rational calculations of the governed. As a concluding remark, if I put it in concise terms, there is something different in the ways in which the population is handled between the accounts of biopolitics and liberal governmentality: It is no longer given as the mere object of regulations, but in terms of a *subject-object* of the governmental techniques as Hoffman calls it (Hoffman, 2014).

3.2.4 Rethinking biopolitics

At this point, I hope that I have succeeded to appropriately demonstrate the difference between the ways the notion of biopolitics and (liberal) governmentality are conceptualized throughout Foucault's work. I would like to give a brief summary of what we have covered up in our discussions up until now: Throughout the texts of the year of 1976, namely the College de France lecture dating on 17 March 1976, and the last chapter of the first volume of *History of Sexuality (Right of Death and Power over Life)*, the notion of biopolitics designates the start of a new epoch in the West starting from the 18th century, the entry of life into the domain of politics. For Foucault, biopolitics also implies a redistribution or reconfiguration of the way through which relations of power operate, in other words, the emergence of a new regime of power, biopower. Foucault designates the operationality of biopower in

terms of State's regulatory techniques and procedures, of which the population stands as the primary object. On the other hand, approximately two years later, starting with *Security, Territory, Population*, there is an alteration in Foucault's tone: The notion of biopolitics seems to be replaced by the notion of governmentality, although the former theme continues to come to surface from time to time in a tenuous way. While I have already discussed the difference between those formulations in length, there is no harm to sum up at least the most crucial point: With the notion of governmentality, Foucault provides us with a more elaborated conceptualization regarding the techniques of exercise of power on the population: First, a mode that correlates with the raison d'État and the technology of police, which operates by way of implementing regulatory techniques and procedures, and which renders the idea of population in terms of a passive aggregate of human beings. And, second, liberal governmentality that operates on the basis of apparatuses of security, which in the end implies a model of government that is modelled in terms of conduct on conducts, that means a modality of exercise of power through which the population stands as an active subject, as well it is the object of the exercise of power.

We could clearly see that, how the notion of biopolitics, as it appeared in the texts of the year 1976, is formulated in quite a similar way to the governmental model of the raison d'État and police. And also, we could see now that, the notion of governmentality provides us with far more elaborate perspective for understanding the ways power functions beyond the mechanisms of regulation. However, does this mean that we should discard the notion of biopolitics once and for all, or in other words, should we understand the said alteration in Foucault's works totally out of countenance for biopolitics. From the disappearance of the theme of biopolitics, we

could surmise that. On the other hand, we could show how Foucault somehow wanted to retain the notion of biopolitics by way of making references to it in some of his discourses.[20] The truth is we cannot be totally certain if such a transition implies a radical break in Foucault's relationship with the notion of biopolitics, or if it is only a temporary displacement. Indeed, such a discussion seems to me as pointless; at least for our purposes here. The thing is, the question of life still stands as a highly crucial problematic for contemporary politics especially if we take what current stage of capitalism has brought into the scene seriously: The contagion of the relations of market to almost all spheres of life. Or, does not the central role that is attributed to the homo economicus, the privileged figure of neoliberalism, who is incentivized and expected to invest through and through in his or her human capital, mean that what is at stake here is no other than the question of life? However, at the same time, we should also acknowledge that the notion of biopolitics stands as an undertheorized aspect in Foucault's late works, in other words, the relation between biopolitics and liberal governmentality was not systematically pursued. So, while Lemke's suggestion is a step that is taken in the right direction, nevertheless it is not sufficient on its own. It appears to me that, rather than overlooking the discrepancies between the ways in which biopolitics and governmentality are formulated, as Lemke does, what needs to be done is a reformulation of the notion of biopolitics itself, especially reframing its operationality beyond the regulative mechanisms of the state and the apparatus of police. Indeed, this is the exact point that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri stress upon while they are formulating their interpretation of biopolitics.

[20] For example, from an interview dating 1982
"Q: Isn't it logical, given these concerns, that you should be writing a genealogy of biopower?
MF: I have no time for that now, but it could be done. In fact, I have to do it." (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 232).

3.3 Biopolitical production through Hardt and Negri

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's perspective[21] involves a major reworking of the said conceptual framework for analyzing the contemporary political and social settings. Hardt and Negri's works have become highly influential, as well as been subject to many controversies in the contemporary discussions around the question of how the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics can be employed for making sense of our present. Such an interest is to a great extent due to the success of the publication of Hardt and Negri's co-written books in the wake of 2000s; *Empire* (Hardt & Negri, 2000), *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Hardt & Negri, 2004), and *Commonwealth* (Hardt & Negri, 2009). While it would not be a sufficient criterion on its own, these books have become international bestsellers[22], which is quite extraordinary for an academic work. That means, writings of Hardt and Negri has reached to considerably wider audiences and were not confined solely to debates within the academic circles. Indeed, such an enormous interest might be better explained with the emergence of the anti or alter globalization movements in the early 2000s all around the world. To be more precise, Hardt and Negri's account, which has "managed to capture contemporary political imaginaries and to reshape the lexicon of theoretical debates" (Lemke, 2016, p.112), has provided promising theoretical tools and innovative perspectives for those who are willing to understand the operationality of global capitalism and contest the forms of domination that it entails. In the following pages, I will be strictly focusing on the role of the notion of biopolitics in the making of their perspective.

[21] However, we should not forget that Hardt and Negri's theoretical approach is a part of a wider research cycle and more or less shared among various scholars and independent theorists who locate themselves in the contested terrain of Autonomist Marxist Project, including Maurizio Lazzarato, Paolo Virno, Judith Revel, Christian Marazzi, Franco Berardi, and others whom I fail to mention here.
[22] Especially, *Empire* has sold more than 40.000 copies in the first year of its publication. (Lemke, 2016)

3.3.1 Biopolitics reframed

In Hardt and Negri's works, the notion of biopolitics is no longer conceptualized in terms of the regulatory mechanisms and techniques that are deployed by the modern state in order to produce normalizing effects on the populations as it was put forward by Michel Foucault in the texts dating to the year 1976. Instead, in a very crude manner, their way of reinterpretation posits the notion of biopolitics in terms of the very condition of "the production of social life itself, in which the economic, the political and the cultural increasingly overlap and invest one another" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xiii) which, for Hardt and Negri, is closely related with the transformations that have occurred in the circuits of global capitalism and labor processes since the 1980s. This "unorthodox" reinterpretation of biopolitics is like a bricolage, or a composition of a wide range of different theoretical currents, an amalgamation of elements ranging from Baruch Spinoza's political philosophy to more recent currents of French post-structuralist thought. Among these sources, I would like to briefly discuss three of the theoretical currents that have paved the road for the making of this novel understanding of biopolitics. First of all, I should briefly introduce Gilles Deleuze's concept of *societies of control* which has an important role in the making of Hardt and Negri's reworking on the notion of biopolitics. Later on, I will mention the role of the in specific understanding of the transformation that has taken place in the capitalist mode of production, an understanding which has its roots in the theoretical works of the movement of Operaismo, what later on becomes Autonomia[23]. And lastly, I will briefly discuss the particular way Hardt and Negri read Foucault, and especially highlight in what terms they differentiate their

[23] Italian Workerist tradition (Operaismo). For further readings on the history of *Operaismo,* [1] *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism* (Wright, 2017), [2] *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (Virno & Hardt, 1996), [3] *Autonomia: Post-Political Politics* (Lotringer & Marazzi, 2007)

framework from Foucault's subsequent stand point. So, rather than directly starting with the notion of biopolitics I would have a little detour and briefly explain how these three theoretical currents are at work in the making of Hardt and Negri's understanding of the notion of biopolitics as it is presented in their works following the publication of *Empire* in the year 2000. I believe that following such a strategy would assist us greatly while trying to explicate Hardt and Negri's account.

3.3.1.1 Societies of control

The concept of societies of control appears in the year 1990, in one of the later writings of Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control" (Deleuze, 1995). The central theme of this short but prolific text is the transition from what Deleuze calls as *disciplinary societies* (in reference to Foucault's work on disciplinary technologies of power) to that of the societies of control. Here, Deleuze articulates the trajectory of the transformation in the modalities of power that has taken place in the epoch of late capitalism, and the single most important claim is that, for Deleuze, the operationality of relations of power could no longer be appropriately understood on the grounds that they are to be deployed through the major sites of confinement, such as the family, the school, the barracks, the factory, the hospital, and the prison as it was the case in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Or, if we put it in more precise terms, what is at stake now is the "general breakdown of all sites of confinement" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 178), and the diffusion of these functions to the whole social fabric. If we directly quote from Deleuze:

> In the *prison system*: the attempt to find "alternatives" to custody, at least for minor offenses, and the use of electronic tagging to force offenders to stay at home between certain hours. In the *school system*: forms of continuous assessment, the impact of continuing education on schools, and the related move away from any research in universities, "business" being brought into education at every level. In the *hospital system*: the new medicine "without

> doctors or patients" that identifies potential cases and subjects at risk and is nothing to do with any progress toward individualizing treatment, which is how it's presented, but is the substitution for individual or numbered bodies of coded "dividual" matter to be controlled. In the *business system*: new ways of manipulating money, products, and men, no longer channeled through the old factory system. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 182)

For Deleuze, these alterations regarding the institutional practices (of power) mark the very process that has taken place in the second half of the 20th century through which disciplinary technologies, which operated via shaping bodies through analytically organized sites of confinement, have gradually given their places to those technologies which aim to control fluxes/flows that run through the networks of the social.

While what Deleuze provides us is not an analytical perspective that consists of a detailed analysis of this transformation −it is a very short text indeed− he gives us important hints regarding the transformation of the operational logic that is in action: While disciplinary technologies were *moldings*, operating through the logic of a closed systems, concentrating forces strictly in prearranged settings of time and space, the new technologies of control are *modulations*, or open-ended systems. In other words, according to Deleuze, control mechanisms function "like a self-transmuting molding continually changing from one moment to the next, or like a sieve whose mesh varies from one point to another" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 179). So then, what is at stake is no other than the gradual expansion of what has been sought after by disciplinary technologies (through sites of confinement) beyond their borders right into the social body, encompassing almost all aspects of social life. Indeed, for Deleuze, this new regime of control is "not just in the system we live under but in the way we live and in our relations with other people too" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 180). In the following pages, I will come back to how this notion of control plays a crucial role in Hardt and Negri's understanding of biopower.

3.3.1.2 Socialized labor

The second source that informs Hardt and Negri's treatment of biopolitics is the Autonomist Marxist theoretical perspective on the transformation that has taken place in the circuits of the capitalist mode of production in late 20th century, especially in terms of the passage from Fordism to post-Fordism.[24] We could say that this passage coincides with the advent of neoliberal governmental models, and it is often discussed in indisputably negative terms in Left discourses: In terms of the precarization of labor, increasing flexibility, de-unionization, intensified exploitation, and so on. On the other hand, those authors who are positioned in the Autonomist Marxist theoretical current stress upon another aspect of this transformation, this time from the perspective of changing labor processes which create the conditions for the emergence of new forms of struggle and, in the last instance, for a possibility of liberation of labor, or in other words the realization of communism. In more precise terms, what they argue for is the transformation from the one regime of labor to another one; from the figure of *mass worker* to that of a new figure, the *socialized worker*. Indeed, such transformation is both the outcome and among the causes[25] of

[24] Briefly speaking the passage from Fordism to post-Fordism implies a radical change in both the production and consumption models. This transformation had its roots at the crisis of the Fordist model of capitalism which has become perceivable at least since the mid-1960s. Fordist model, due to economic, political and technological exhaustion, was no longer able to siphon surplus-value from the sphere of production and has resulted in the pursuit of growth without accumulation of capital in the traditional sense. The new strategy that had been implemented was to increase profitability with techniques such as promoting flexible work, decreasing the wages, limiting the power of the trade-unions, and increased financialization. In short, this transition made possible the capital's profitability "outside" the traditional sphere of production, the factory, as it has been impossible for the surplus financial capital to be totally absorbed by the investment in the "productive" sectors.

[25] For Negri, the transition from Fordist mode of capitalism to the post-Fordism cannot be fully grasped without examining the class struggles of 60s and 70s as well as the altering composition of the working class. Intensive struggles of the working class of the said era (most significant ones were the strategies of refusal and self-valorization) made irreversible alterations in the composition of class. The figure of mass worker utilizing those strategies made fractures within the factory which was itself a Taylorist enclosure. Rather than being subjected to the rationality of Fordist mode of production, he/she was inclined much more to autonomy. Capitalist's response to this state of crisis was the promotion of flexibility. The radical movement of the mass worker was at the same time victorious and defeated. It was victorious because in the end the degree of socialization of labor was intensively high, more than it ever was through the course of history. It was defeated as the crisis of the capitalist

the demise of Fordist industrial capitalism and the advent of what might be called as the post-Fordist New Economy (Marazzi, 2008).

For Autonomist Marxist writers, perhaps the single most important characteristic of this transformation is the tendency of the *socialization of work* (Negri, 2005). What is implied by this very term is the diffusion of work to the whole society as a result of "the growth of mobility, of part-time, casual and domestic work, the absence of job fixity, the diffusion of production in the 'informal' economy, the unity of production, circulation and reproduction" (Negri, 1988, p. 100) in late capitalism. That means, for supporters of this viewpoint, production could no longer be confined to the boundaries of factory or to the production of material goods and commodities. Or, if we put it in other words, what has taken place is no other than society's transformation into a vast network of production, in the end "integrating the collective forces of labor even as it turned society into a giant factory" (Negri & Guattari, 2010, p. 34). At this point, we could clearly acknowledge the close proximity between the line of argumentation here and Deleuze's account on the societies of control. If we directly quote from Mario Tronti:

> At the highest level of capitalist development, the social relation becomes a moment of the relation of production, the whole of society becomes an articulation of production; in other words, the whole of society exists as a function of the factory and the factory extends its exclusive domination over the whole of society. . . . The process of capitalist society's unitary recomposition, a process imposed by the specific developments of its production, can no longer tolerate a political terrain that is even formally independent of the network of social relations. (Tronti, quoted in Wright, 2017, p.34)

But, most importantly, for, intellectuals who are a part of Autonomist Marxist circles, this situation marks a radical change in the class composition under this new mode of capitalism: This new class composition consists of not only the members of

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mode of production was overcome and the order was re-constituted, at least for a period of time, the struggles of the working class preceded and prefigured the successive re-structurations of capital.

the traditional working class, in other words the proletariat, but also includes the youth, women, unemployed, immigrants, students and those others whose participation in the labor processes has been largely ignored and deemed as unproductive. This means every member of a given society under the conditions of late capitalist regime participates in the process of production in a direct way. In other words, the classical dichotomy between the production and reproduction is to be overcome for good. So then, Hardt and Negri's approach signifies a break from *factoryist* definitions of working class that have been dominating the orthodox Marxist accounts and the inclusion of "casual, part-time, and non-guaranteed work and the underground economy, as well as housework and non-remunerated work" (Thoburn, 2003, p.86) into consideration. But more importantly, socialization of work and the emergence of the figure of socialized worker mark a critical threshold in the development of capitalism that renders the role of the capital completely parasitic on the necessary social cooperation for fulfilling the needs of production.

At this point, let's recall what I have mentioned a while ago: For those writers who are a part of the Autonomist Marxist circles, this process of socialization of work creates suitable conditions for the emergence of new forms of struggles, even a possibility for communism, just as it signifies a generalized condition of exploitation due to the enormous expansion of capitalist production relations. How is it possible to argue for the possibility of communism under the unequivocal expansion of capitalism? Indeed, from the perspective of Autonomist Marxism, such an expansion of capital, virtually through the whole fabric of society, at the same time means that the expansion of antagonistic class struggles to the whole social body is in effect as well. Such a circumstance creates virtual lines for resistance and struggle and fertile grounds for politics that could challenge forms of capitalist mode of production. In

the following pages, I will explicate how this theoretical approach is further developed in Hardt and Negri's formulations of *biopolitical production* and the *multitude*.

3.3.1.3 Rethinking Foucauldian categories

The last theoretical current that informs Hardt and Negri's work, which I will mention is Foucault's perspective on biopolitics and power. As a point of departure, I could mention that Hardt and Negri takes the notion of biopolitics in terms of "a political economy of life in general" (Negri, 2008, p. 31) rather than a police technique. However, if we closely examine Hardt and Negri's coauthored works, we could come across to two important criticisms that are directed towards Foucault's perspective. First one addresses the conceptualization of biopolitics. Hardt and Negri argue that while Foucault successfully grasps the general horizon of biopolitics, which is no other than the politicization of life, he is somehow trapped in a *structuralist epistemology*:

> By structuralist epistemology here we mean the reinvention of a functionalist analysis in the realm of the human sciences, a method that effectively sacrifices the dynamic of the system, the creative temporality of its movements, and the ontological substance of cultural and social reproduction. In fact, if at this point we were to ask Foucault who or what drives the system, or rather, who is the "bios," his response would be ineffable, or nothing at all. What Foucault fails to grasp finally are the real dynamics of production in biopolitical society. (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 28)

In other words, for Hardt and Negri, Foucault's understanding of biopolitics stands as a static one and is too much concentrated on the top-down processes of power, unable to generate a perspective from the bottom and acknowledge the productive dynamics of behind biopolitics. Whether such a criticism is justified or not seems to me as highly questionable; nevertheless, it reflects an attempt for going beyond the understanding of biopolitics in terms of regulatory procedures and police techniques

of the State as it was presented in Foucault's text dating to 1976. To this end Hardt and Negri incorporate the dynamics of production into the theoretical framework of biopolitics under their concept of biopolitical production.

The second issue concerns the way how Hardt and Negri's understanding of power differentiates from that of Foucault's. This is a difference related to how the notion of resistance is handled in these two accounts respectively. Briefly speaking, Hardt and Negri claim that the notion of resistance appears as an undertheorized aspect in Foucault's conceptualization of power, especially throughout his formulation of biopolitics. While Hardt and Negri clearly acknowledge that the notion of resistance is posited as an integral element in Foucault's conceptualization of power, they argue that it appears as "too dependent on and subordinate to the power it opposes" (Hardt & Negri, 2009, p. 56). If we dig a little bit deeper, we could see that this very difference has its roots in how Hardt and Negri conceptualize the notion of power: If we put it in a crude way, Hardt and Negri distinguish between two modalities of power; the *power of bodies* and *the power over bodies*. Such a distinction directly comes from Negri's reading of the political philosophy of Baruch Spinoza. In his *Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics* (Negri, 2000), Negri outlines a theoretical account through which the notion of power is articulated in two distinct directions, *potentia* and *potestas*. For Negri, this difference is to be sketched out by way understanding the former as the power of bodies, which is singular, horizontal, immanent and affirmative constituent power, and what is the very source of resistance that has the capacity for opening up new possibilities, and the latter as the power over bodies, which designates unitary, hierarchical, transcendental, and negating constituted power of command. This distinction is further carried to their conceptualization of the antagonism where they

posit between the notion of biopolitics and biopower, or put it in other words, between the *power of life* and the *power over life*.

3.3.2 Biopolitical production versus biopower

Here at last, we are able to introduce what distinguishes Hardt and Negri's account on the notion of biopolitics from others in a more detailed way. It appears to me that this very distinction between the concepts of biopolitics and biopower stands to be the single most crucial aspect of their conceptualization leading up to this explanation of the antagonistic relationship that is posited between the *multitude* and the *Empire*.

So then, let's start with the question of what the notion of biopolitics implies for Hardt and Negri. The term "biopolitics" designates a generalized condition or context that characterizes not only the contemporary regimes of power, but more importantly, the contemporary modes of production under the globalized stage of late capitalism. However, it has to be underlined that the term mode of production here does not involve only the production of material goods or commodities. What is at stake in their analysis is, on the one hand, "the historical transformation of capitalist production itself to include language, subjectivity, affects, and desire" (Read, 2010, pp. 25-26), and on the other hand, the "reconsideration of production not simply as the production of things but as the production of relations and subjects, as the constitution of the world." (Read, 2010, pp. 25-26). If we directly quote from Hardt and Negri's *Multitude*:

> [T]he dominant form of contemporary production, which exerts its hegemony over the others, creates "immaterial goods" such as ideas, knowledge, forms of communication, and relationships. In such immaterial labor, production spills over beyond the bounds of the economy traditionally conceived to engage culture, society, and politics directly. What is produced in this case is not just material goods but actual social relationships and forms of life. We

> will call this kind of production "biopolitical" to highlight how general its products are and how directly it engages social life in its entirety. (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 94)

What is at stake, then, is a major reworking, or reformulation of Foucauldian notion of biopolitics by way of incorporating this perspective of production to the conceptual framework of biopolitics. This implies a radical metamorphosis in the conceptualization of biopolitics, to the extent that one could speak of the birth of a novel concept, the concept of biopolitical production. In other words, from the perspective of Hardt and Negri, the question of biopolitics, or perhaps we should call it as biopolitical production from here on, first and foremost involves the question of the production of social life as well as its administration.

At this point, I would like to ask and try to seek an answer to the following question: Who are driving this system of production for Hardt and Negri, does the notion of proletariat meet the requirements of this new regime of production? To start with the latter, for Hardt and Negri, the concept of industrial working class stands as an ineffective analytical perspective for explaining this new epoch: "The concept of the working class is a limited one both from the point of view of production (since it essentially includes industrial workers), and from that of social cooperation (given that it comprises only a small quantity of the workers who operate in the complex of social production)." (Negri, 2008, p. 115) What Hardt and Negri proposes instead is the concept of multitude, the new collective subject of biopolitical production. Indeed, what is implied by the concept of multitude could be regarded as the continuation of the thesis of the socialized worker. Greatly sharing its characteristics, the concept of the multitude also designates a new class composition that consists of new forms and regimes of labor beyond the walls of the factory; it also envisages the incorporation of virtually every member of a given society into the

circuits of production, thus, affecting an unprecedented level of social cooperation. However, there are also some differences in the way that multitude is conceptualized. Most importantly, the concept implies that this very condition of biopolitical production now extends to the whole globe.

However, we should not forget that while the multitude stands as the very subject of the biopolitical production, at the same time, it stands as the object of intensified exploitation by capital. Indeed, For Hardt and Negri, this phrase of "intensified exploitation" appears to me as the one of the most crucial aspects of their theoretical framework. Referencing to the originally unpublished sixth chapter of the first volume of Karl Marx's *Capital* (Marx, 1990), Hardt and Negri assert that current stage of global capitalism is better be understood in terms of the passage from the *formal subsumption* to the *real subsumption* of society under capital[26]. That means "the integration of labor into capital becomes more intensive than extensive and society is ever more completely fashioned by capital" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 255). Indeed, this line of argumentation directly brings the concept of biopower into the scene. For Hardt and Negri,

> Biopower is a form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it. Power can achieve an effective command over the entire life of the population only when it becomes an integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord. . . . The highest function of this power is to invest life through and through, and its primary task is to administer life. Biopower thus refers to a situation in which what is directly at

[26] For Marx, subsumption is the process by which the social relations of production penetrate the labor process itself. He designates two stages of subsumption: In the formal subsumption, capital operates with an already existing labor process, including techniques, markets, means of production and workers. The capitalist strives to appropriate the surplus-value by forcing the worker to submit to the wage-labor, but the process as a whole is not totally subsumed by capitalist mode of production (for example, the workers' means of subsistence outside capital remains its existence). On the other hand, the real subsumption of labor designates the situation in which the labor process is really subsumed under capital. It implies a condition in which the gradual transformation of the social relations and modes of labor into a state which conforms to the requirements of capital is succeeded. For further reading: See, especially the appendix, *Results of The Immediate Process of Production*, of the first volume of Capital (Marx, 1990)

> stake in power is the production and reproduction of life itself. (Hardt & Negri, 2000, pp. 23-24)

From such a definition of biopower, it would not be inconvenient to argue that Deleuze's notion of societies of control has been further developed in the works of Hardt and Negri. Indeed, their understanding of biopower could be better understood as a generalized condition of control that is exercised over the biopolitical production of the multitude. At this point, recall that biopolitical production is formulated as extending to the whole globe. Indeed, the same holds true for biopower, biopower also extends to the whole globe from the perspective of Hardt and Negri. And, this is the exact point that the concept of Empire steps in.

For Hardt and Negri, what designates this globalized regime of control in the context of ever reaching capitalism is the concept of Empire. But before moving further, we should not forget that for Hardt and Negri, as well as being *class concepts*, the multitude and Empire also stand as *concepts of power*. First of all, Empire is "a new form of sovereignty" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, pp. xi) and a global system of domination. What is important to note is that this new form of sovereignty called as Empire is fairly different than the classical understanding of sovereignty that is usually attributed to the State. First, this novel mode of imperial sovereignty does not have any center and it primarily operates through networks. Moreover, for Hardt and Negri, such transformation marks the decline in the importance of role of the nation-states in the global politics and the massive increase of the importance of, on the one hand, global corporations, and, on the other hand, supranational organizations such as United Nations, IMF, European Union, and so on. Indeed, Empire is "characterized by the tight interlocking of economic structures with juridico-political arrangements" (Lemke, 2016, p. 112). Second, this is not a matter of reviving the theories of imperialism in the age of globalism. From Hardt and

Negri's perspective, Empire does not denote the classical imperialist domination of the periphery by the center and does not operate by way of acquisition of land and resources. Indeed, Empire refers to an all-encompassing form of domination that operates beyond the limits of territory, or any kind of boundaries. In other words, for Hardt and Negri, there is no outside of the Empire, "the entire globe is its domain" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 190). But, does this mean that there is no alternative, or any possibility for liberation under such circumstances? We could argue that Hardt and Negri are quite optimistic while they are answering this question:

> Empire creates a greater potential for revolution than did the modern regimes of power because it presents us, alongside the machine of command, with an alternative: the set of all the exploited and the subjugated, a multitude that is directly opposed to Empire, with no mediation between them. (Hardt & Negri 2000, p. 393)

Hence the concept of biopolitics from the perspective of Hardt and Negri marks the possibility for the emergence of post-capitalist democracy in terms of the biopolitical production of the multitude, just as it means the establishment of an overreaching global form of domination in terms of the regime of biopower called Empire.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to give an account of the ways that the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics is reinterpreted in order to explicate the contemporary world, by way of analyzing two prominent approaches. The first is rethinking biopolitics within the conceptual framework of liberal governmentality, and the second is the route that Hardt and Negri have taken. We could say that what is common to both of these accounts is the understanding of biopolitics in terms of the administration of life under the conditions of global capitalism, and distinctively, throughout Hardt and

Negri's account, a creative process of production of life at the crossroads of the economical and the political.

I have argued that, while Lemke's suggestion should be regarded as a step that is taken in the right direction, nevertheless it is not sufficient on its own due to the fairly different conceptualizations of biopolitics and (liberal) governmentality in Foucault's work. Indeed, this was the exact reason why I have introduced Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's major reformulation of the notion of biopolitics. And, I have tried to focus on the question of to what extent Hardt and Negri's reformulation of the concept might be seen as successful analytical perspectives for explicating what appears to be most crucial in the making of the socio-political scene of early 2000s. If we stick with Hardt and Negri's perspective what we have is the incorporation of every aspect of life into the circuits of the market and at the same time reconfiguration of the state and society in reference to the logic of the market, in other words, their analysis of decentralized and deregulated forms of control in favor of global markets. On the other hand, in addition to the expansion of capitalism incorporating every aspect of life into its circuits in an unprecedented way, we could also acknowledge creative aspects of biopolitical production. That means experimental politics that is capable of creating new forms of life beyond the horizon of global capitalism. From Zapatistas to the alter-globalization movements we could cite lots of examples. On the other hand, there are also limits of these accounts. If we put it in more precise terms, what is often overlooked is no other than the risk of the turning of biopolitics into thanatopolitics, which Foucault seems to be aware of this when he had coined the concept.

In order to explain it in a better way, let's take the case of Turkey as an example: Starting from the 2000s, such a theoretical framework could be regarded as

a handy conceptual toolset for rendering the transformation that has occurred under Justice and Development Party's (AKP) government intelligible. We could clearly acknowledge how life has become an integral element in the domain where the political intermingles with the economy. From a range of issues that are directly related with life in general, from healthcare (the campaigns against smoking and limiting the consumption of alcohol) to the fabrication of the population (politics of abortion), we could acknowledge that understanding biopolitics in terms of the control over life under neoliberal regime is a favorable option. At the same time, we could also see how Hardt and Negri's account holds good when we try to explicate the experimental politics that aim to invent new forms of life, from the experience of cooperatives to that of the massive Gezi Park protests through which new forms of communal life have been experimented. However, I think that we also need to be able to explain the radical rupture that has taken place in recent years: Events following the June 7th elections of 2015 led to the resurgence of intensified political violence, peaking in full-scale urban warfare that left several Kurdish settlements in ruins, and a restless attempt for the recentralization of power in state's hands, far beyond the boundaries of existing legal norms. Especially following the declaration of the state of emergency, in the wake of the 15th July coup d'état attempt, the extent of the political crisis has become more manifest than ever. The scene is surely marked by the immense crackdown on dissidents, but what seems to me as more startling is the emergence of a politics of "blood and soil" that ceaselessly demands confrontation with a spectral enemy and glorifies sacrifice and death.

Indeed, such a transformation is not exclusive to the context in Turkey only. We are living in a world that is haunted by the gruesome and stupefying violence in varying intensities, ranging from civil wars all around the globe to the "lone wolf"

attacks in the metropoles of the West. On the other hand, we are witnessing the ascent of authoritarianism and more centralized forms of government, even the creeping rise of the neo-fascist movements that feed upon the seemingly ever-growing process of destabilization and crisis. So then, briefly speaking, what we have is, on the one hand, the advent of authoritarian political regimes that no longer could easily be considered as liberal or even neoliberal regimes; and on the other hand, the emergence of the different modalities of intensified political violence. So then, the most crucial question that we should address is the following: To what extent is the perspective that is generated by the notion of biopolitics an appropriate theoretical toolset when we try to make sense of this new configuration of politics? As the contemporary configuration of politics brings death and destruction into middle of the scene, it seems to me that what needs to be done is no other than a serious reassessment of the concept of biopolitical governance in the face of emergence of conditions marked with intensified violence. It is towards this end that in the following chapter, I will concentrate on the works of those authors who provide us with perspectives that interrogate the dark side of biopolitics: First, its relationship with the notion of sovereignty, and second, with the notion of violence.

CHAPTER 4

BIOPOLITICS AND SOVEREIGNTY

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, I have discussed how the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics could be deployed as an analytical grid for making sense of our present; first by interrogating the plausibility of those claims for locating the notion of biopolitics within the broader theoretical framework of liberal governmentality, and second, by way of visiting Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's account which stands as an attempt for reformulating the notion of biopolitics in terms of *biopolitical production* for building a critical analysis of the dynamics beneath the process of capitalist globalization and the changing regimes of production (of social life). Especially Hardt and Negri's theoretical approach stands to be highly promising in analyzing the transformation that has been taken place since the 1980s, in other words, in giving a clear account on the ascent of neoliberalism, the globalization of market under unbounded capitalism, and the operationality of socio-political institutions and governmental practices that have culminated throughout this period. Their analysis highlights the decline in the importance of the traditional role of the nation states and the expanse of supranational non-state organizations in the making of the socio-political contexts of 2000s. To be more precise, what the greatest merit of such an account is its shedding light into the operationality of the non-centralized political forms (either in terms of control or resistance to it). However, I argue that, Hardt and Negri's perspective seems to be somehow falling short in the face of the recent developments that have taken place in recent years.

What we are facing today could be subsumed under two categories. On the one hand, there is the emergence of modalities of intensified political violence. From full-scale civil wars as in Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen to the sporadic acts of political violence that haunt nearly the entire globe, such as lone-wolf attacks, bombings or shootouts, our contemporary political context is marked by an intensified degree of political violence which enters directly to the sphere of everyday life, traverses the very networks of the social and brings an enormous level of uncertainty. On the other hand, we are witnessing the ascent of various forms of authoritarianisms, even to the extent of the creeping rise of neo-fascist movements that feed upon the ever-growing process of destabilization and crisis. We could argue that this very tendency of authoritarianism is the embodiment of the desire for recentralization of power in order to restore the ultimate authority of the State and put an end to not only the uncertainty that is brought by the threat of different modalities of political violence but also the economic uncertainty that is the direct result of the neoliberal unregulated economy. Moreover, we could also speak of a gradual decline in the political significance of supranational organizations. The unforeseeable future of the integrity of the European Union after Brexit and the United Nations' growing incapacity for intervening in the global conflicts may be the most concrete examples.

Nonetheless, it would be a serious mistake to assume that such recent developments imply a return to those times before the neoliberal transformation had taken place. To be more specific, it appears to me that, what we are witnessing is not a reincarnation of the nation state of modernity that has found its basis on legal grounds and its operationality in the ensuring of the welfare of the population. Indeed, it is quite the opposite: What seems to be characterizing this new configuration of the political context is marked by a recentralizing force that

ceaselessly transgresses the boundaries of the already existing laws and proves its strength by its capacity for lethality. From Donald Trump's presidency which rests more and more on the implementation of executive orders to that of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's unchecked rule in Turkey under the context of indefinite state of emergency, we could easily pinpoint this very tendency. However, when these two elements overlap, namely, when the modalities of intensified political violence and these forms of authoritarianism meet, what we have is a strange configuration of the socio-political context: An ever-growing process of destabilization and a seemingly never-ending political crisis, but at the same time a strong tendency for the recentralization of power, far beyond the boundaries of existing legal norms. More importantly, such context is characterized in terms of a high degree of lethality which in the end gives way to a generalized politics of fear that is partaking the form of a latent civil war.

This kind of a transformation in the configuration of socio-political context, if not renders the theoretical analyses, what we have discussed in the previous chapter, of biopolitics as the governability and control of populations, completely obsolete, it forces us to rethink the very extent of them. In this chapter, I will concentrate on the theoretical currents through which the question of biopolitics is no longer posed in terms of the decentralized regimes of governance but from considerably different perspectives: First, I will visit readings that interrogate the relationship between notions of biopolitics and sovereignty. And, then I will move to discuss those accounts that prioritize the uncertain relationship that exists between biopolitics and political violence. Indeed, what I am doing in the following pages could be seen as dwelling deeper on these two issues which we had started in the first chapter.

4.2 A Return to the theme of sovereignty

In the last decade there has been an increasing attention to the notion of sovereignty in the works of political theorists and social scientists, especially for understanding the political atmosphere that is created by the "War on Terror" that is conducted by United States and its allies following 9/11 attacks. This reassessment of the notion of sovereignty is encountered in the writings of scholars who are influenced by Michel Foucault's work. Indeed, such an increasing interest on the theme of sovereignty is totally understandable as the said notion implies both the centralization of power and violence in the Foucauldian theoretical framework.[27] In the previous chapter, I have already noted that in Hardt and Negri's books, Empire was formulated as a new form

[27] According to Foucault, through the middle ages European continent had witnessed the emergence of a new modality of power. In Foucauldian theoretical framework, such a modality of power is coined as royal, sovereign, or juridical power. In Foucault's own words, this new modality has "perhaps been the most aggressive and the most conquering; they have been capable of the most stupefying violence, against themselves as well as against others." (Foucault, 2000a, p. 303) Throughout Foucault's writings the sovereign or juridical power is often associated with employment of negative functions such as prohibition, repression, carrying out lethal force, and its mode of operation is formulated in the motto of "to take life and let live*"*. Sovereign power functions through signs and levies. First, the sovereign power constitutes an intensive regime of signs. The spectacle of showing force is the ultimate aim of the sovereign: Everyone should learn who has the power; while it targets the ones who break the laws (breaking laws is regarded as a direct violation of the sovereign's right) simultaneously it intimidates others by exposing the violence of punishment publicly; that's why public executions and tortures are among the fundamental tools in the repertoire of regimes in which sovereign power stands as the dominant mode. And second, the sovereign power functions through levies: Power is exercised mainly as a means of deduction. In Foucault's words:

> [A] subtraction mechanism, a right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods and services, labor and blood, levied on the subjects. Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it. (Foucault, 1978. p.136)

For Foucault, in the sovereign modality of power, the preservation and continuity of the condition of sovereignty are the highest goal. For this reason, sovereignty does not have its own finality and there is always a self-referring circularity (to reinforce, to strengthen, and to protect itself) regarding it. Foucault argues that, by this very reason, there is an essential discontinuity between the sovereign person and his subjects: The sovereign person stays always as transcendent, singular and external. Another important thing, which is closely related to the externality of the sovereignty to his subjects, is the object of the exercise of sovereign power: It is the land whether it is acquired by force or inherited. Ruling over the territory is the fundamental way for the sovereign to maintain its power intact. The people on it whether be regarded as individual bodies or as populations are only variables. In other words, anything done for the population under the sovereign power is done to augment the power of the sovereign. Its objective is no other than to show who executes the power (the sovereign/ the state) and to consolidate this power, this is precisely the dominant rationality behind it. In a more precise way, the dominant rationality in the modality of sovereign power could be defined as the unconditional drive for maximization and concentration of power.

of sovereignty. Moreover, we could locate this tendency in different guises, in terms of *biosovereignty* in Banu Bargu's *Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons* (Bargu, 2014), as *agonal sovereignty* in François Debrix and Alexander Barder's *Beyond Biopolitics: Theory, Violence, and Horror in World Politics* (Debrix & Barder, 2013), as *apophatic sovereignty* in Allen Feldman's *Archives of the Insensible: Of War, Photopolitics, and Dead Memory* (Feldman, 2015), or in terms of *corporate sovereignty* in Joshua Barkan's *Corporate sovereignty: Law and Government Under Capitalism* (Barkan, 2013). While each of these authors follows different paths and problematize different aspects, what stands as the common element is that their works reflect a tendency in critical social and political theory which might be called a return to the theme of sovereignty.

While such a list could be expanded further, I will be focusing on a single theoretical line of thought, which I think stands as one of the most decisive theoretical interventions for this tendency of rethinking the notion of sovereignty: which is no other than the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben's way of conceptualization. Why is this so? While this question could be answered in many ways, Agamben's reintroduction of the Schmittian notion of *state of exception* to the lexicon of contemporary social and political theories plays an important role. In Agamben's writings, the central problematic that needs to be stressed upon while theorizing biopolitics is neither neoliberalism and the governmental model it operates through, nor the extent of transformation in contemporary capitalist production regimes. Agamben's account presents a more pessimistic understanding of what the notion of biopolitics implies, "not as the starting point for potential projects of liberation, but as the catastrophic endpoint of a political tradition that originates in Greek antiquity and leads to the National Socialist concentration camps" (Lemke,

2005, p.4). Most importantly, what characterizes Agamben's account is the close connection that is posited between the notions of biopolitics and sovereignty.

4.3 Agambenian understanding of biopolitics

I will be especially focusing our attention on two seminal texts of Agamben: *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* which was published in the year 1995, and *State of Exception,* dating to the year 2003 which was written in the atmosphere that is dominated by United States' exceptionalism throughout the global campaign of "War on Terror" following the 9/11 attacks. What distinguishes Agamben's way of understanding of the notion of biopolitics is the close relationship he posits between the concepts of biopolitics and sovereignty, stressing upon the "hidden point of intersection between the juridico-institutional and the biopolitical models of power" (Agamben, 1998, p. 6). If I attempt to outline Agamben's theoretical framework in a very crude way, the following quotation from *Homo Sacer* could greatly assist us as a guideline:

> 1. The original political relation is the ban (the state of exception as zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exclusion and inclusion).
> 2. The fundamental activity of sovereign power is the production of bare life as originary political element and as threshold of articulation between nature and culture, zoē and bios.
> 3. Today it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West. (Agamben, 1998, p. 181)

Indeed, these three theses constitute the main pillars of Agamben's reformulation of the notion biopolitics, and what I will do in the following pages is an in-detail analysis of each of them.

I should also point out that Agamben's understanding of biopolitics could be seen as a major reworking on Foucault's original framework through an attempt of

locating Carl Schmitt's[28] conceptualization of sovereignty within the Foucauldian conceptual framework of biopolitics. This is why, before moving to discuss the extent of Agamben's reformulation of the notion of biopolitics, it seems to me as necessary to briefly outline the general framework of Schmitt's political thought. Thus, we will take a short detour in order to briefly introduce Schmitt's way of theorizing the notions of *the political* and *sovereignty*. In this summary I will also try to highlight the decisive difference between Schmitt's and Foucault's theoretical accounts before discussing the terms these two accounts come together in Agamben's work and also take up the question of what extent Agamben's account could be seen as successful in overcoming the conflicts and tensions between these theoretical accounts.

4.3.1 The Schmittian legacy

Schmitt's work stands as one of the most important influences for Agamben's reformulation of Foucauldian notion of biopolitics. I will not attempt to explicate the whole range of Schmitt's political thought; indeed, my focus will exclusively be on two aspects: First is the concept of the political which appears in Schmitt's well-

[28] Carl Schmitt is a legal theorist and political philosopher who stands as a highly controversial figure. His works have been overshadowed for a long time by his relationship with The National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) and his occupation as the president of the Union of National-Socialist Jurists between the years 1933 and 1936. However, the most plausible way to understand Schmitt is that his relation with NSDAP was opportunistic and his views was favored by some members of movement of the National Socialism. Nazis' shattering the organization of constitutional state, and their replacement of the party apparatus instead of it, undermined the relationship between Schmitt and Nazis and in 1936, long before the catastrophic downfall of the Third Reich, Schmitt was declared as a *persona non-grata* in the SS publication *Das Schwarze Korps*. However, approaching to Schmitt's work as it is the work of the juridical theoretician of the Third Reich can hinder one from understanding the true extent of his theoretical claims. Schmitt was a follower of a juridical tradition influenced by Paul Laband, in which the state had a privileged role in the legal system and, without any doubt, he always positioned himself on the side of order and unity of the state. Also, it should be noted that Schmitt strived tremendously to redefine the conception of "the political" in a polemical way against the liberal understanding of politics. His theoretical work can be regarded as one of the sharpest critiques of political liberalism, and his work has been interpreted in various ways by theorists both from the leftwing and rightwing traditions. For further readings on Schmitt: *The Enemy: An Intellectual Portrait of Carl Schmitt* (Balakrishnan, 2000)

known book entitled, *The Concept of the Political* (Schmitt, 2007), and second is the way he formulates the concept of sovereignty which appears in his *The Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Schmitt, 2005).

So, let's start with giving a concise account of what Schmitt's concept of *the political* designates in the first place. "The concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political" (Schmitt, 2007, p. 19). This is the very first sentence of the "The Concept of the Political" and it stands as a bit trivial if we consider Schmitt's apparent disposition towards the order and unity of the state. For Schmitt, what is at stake here could be reformulated simply in the following way: The political predates the state. This is indeed one of the most crucial aspects in Schmitt's political thought. Why is this so? Perhaps, I should here add that the whole text was written in a polemical fashion against both the 19th century liberal theoreticians' understanding of the state as a neutral or noninterventionist political entity as well as those theories of the absolutist state that culminated in the 18th century political thought through which the state is posited as a stable entity that stands above the society. More importantly, both of these approaches share a common ground: The state has an ultimate monopoly over politics. For Schmitt, this equation of politics with the state, or more precisely the attribution of what is political solely to the operationality of the state no longer functions in the context of the 20th century. In Schmitt's own words:

> The equation state = politics becomes erroneous and deceptive at exactly the moment when state and society penetrate each other. What had been up to that point affairs of state become thereby social matters, and, vice versa, what had been purely social matters become affairs of state—as must necessarily occur in a democratically organized unit. Heretofore ostensibly neutral domains—religion, culture, education, the economy—then cease to be neutral in the sense that they do not pertain to state and to politics. As a polemical concept against such neutralizations and depoliticizations of important domains appears the total state, which potentially embraces every domain. This results in the identity of state and society. In such a state, therefore, everything is at least potentially political, and in referring to the state it is no

> longer possible to assert for it a specifically political characteristic. (Schmitt, 2007, p. 22)

From this passage, one could understand to what end Schmitt insists on the separation between the political and the state. For him, the equation of state and politics only brings the formula of "political against social" and the depoliticizations of various domains such as religion, culture, economy, and so on. More precisely, for Schmitt, the scope of the political is wider than the state and, in an appropriate way, the political cannot be attributed solely to the affairs of the state especially in the context of the 20th century when the state and society penetrate and permeate each other in the context of Totalstaat (the total state).

What defines the political for Schmitt? Indeed, this is the central question that Schmitt pushes forth throughout the whole text, and for him, the concept of the political can be appropriately defined only when specific and distinct political categories are to be discovered; in other words, the political should have its own criteria. From Schmitt's perspective, what is morally good or bad, aesthetically beautiful or ugly, or economically profitable or unprofitable cannot be the definitive criteria of the political. Instead, Schmitt argues that, what constitutes the specific category of the political is no other than the distinction between the *friend* and the *enemy*. If we put it in different words, for Schmitt, politics is primarily an activity that operates via distinguishing friends from enemies. It is important to remark here that the figures of friend and enemy are not defined in a "private-individualistic sense as a psychological expression of private emotions and tendencies" (Schmitt, 2007, p. 28). The political enemy is not the personal enemy that one hates, or in a similar fashion the political friend is not the personal friend that one likes. In other words, the political enemy is *hostis* not *inimicus*; that means both these figures always stand as public figures.

If we put it in more precise terms such distinction between friend and enemy designates a situation in which a "collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity" (Schmitt, 2007, p. 28). Another important aspect that should be remarked in Schmitt's account is the existential and concrete character of these figures; they are not metaphors or symbols. Moreover, Schmitt does not conceptualize the figures of the friend and the enemy, thus what pertains to the political, on normative grounds: Virtually anything could be politicized on the condition that they host the sufficient degree of antagonism which groups the people as friends versus enemies. For Schmitt, the distinction of the friend and the enemy designates union and separation, or association and dissociation at the utmost degree. In other words, the figure of the enemy is always depicted as a stranger or the other. So, as a result, extreme cases of the conflict with the enemy stands as a real possibility.

Since the figure of the enemy always carries the idea of an existential threat within itself, for Schmitt, the political always stands as the site of struggle or conflict. So, while Schmitt argues that his way of understanding the political "neither favors war nor militarism" (Schmitt, 2007, p. 33), and although it is an extreme case scenario, the idea of war stands as a real possibility. Indeed, this very possibility of war, or any kind of violent confrontation, that constantly haunts the political appears as one of the most important characteristics of Schmitt's political thought. In fact, it is the very aspect that differentiates Schmitt's perspective from that of Thomas Hobbes's. In Schmitt's words:

> [T]he quintessential nature of the state of nature, or the behemoth, is none other than civil war, which can only be prevented by the overarching might of the state, or the leviathan. It follows that one of the monsters, the leviathan "state", continuously holds down the other monster, the behemoth "revolutionary people". (Schmitt, 1996. p. 21)

For Schmitt, what pertains to the political always harbors a degree of uncertainty; it is no other than the "political struggle which gives rise to political order" (Hirst, 1999, p. 9). More importantly, if what is sought to be attained is the persistence of public order and security, such a task cannot be attained without an active intervention. Indeed, this is the exact point of departure for Schmitt when he conceptualizes the notion of sovereignty.

So then, we are about to introduce the highly controversial Schmittian concept of sovereignty. The single most important claim that Schmitt makes through his conceptualization of sovereignty is inscribed in the following formula: "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (Schmitt, 2005, p. 5). Indeed, what is crucial regarding this formulation could be put under two categories. At first sight, one can easily acknowledge the privileged status that is attributed to the notion of decision. Second it is the exception that defines the notion of sovereignty. And, what I will be exclusively focusing on is this theme of exception.

We need to begin with the question of how the concept of sovereignty is situated in relation to the legal order. From its very definition we could easily acknowledge that, for Schmitt, the sovereign is not the one who has the right to produce or to legislate laws. On the contrary, the sovereign is the one who is capable of suspending the law, who can make the ultimate decision on the exception. However, the concept of the state of exception does not designate a condition of juridical chaos or a calling for a condition marked by lawlessness[29]. On the contrary,

[29] Indeed, we could trace the themes of sovereignty and the state of exception to the earlier writings of Schmitt on dictatorship. Agamben, who broadens Schmitt's account by discussing for the distinction between a norm and its application, draws attention to the irreducibility between those two notions. He, then, reevaluates Schmitt's distinction between the commissarial dictatorship and the sovereign type. While the former involves a temporary state of exception in order to guarantee the preservation of the preexisting constitution; the latter represents the extreme figure of the constituent power as in the cases of successful revolutions such as October Revolution or events similar to the case of NSDAP's seizure and the disintegration of the state and replacing it with the party apparatus in the project of the Third Reich. Agamben discusses that a legal norm is in force but not applied in the

what is at stake here is no other than "the preservation of the state and the defence [sic] of legitimately constituted government and the stable institutions of society" (Hirst, 1999, p. 12).

In other words, the possibility of the state of exception (thus, sovereignty) is not located completely outside of the legal framework even it signifies a ground beyond the norm of the law. Nevertheless, the state of exception clearly designates a *lacuna* in the very heart of the juridical order. Indeed, Schmitt precisely remarks that his is a borderline concept that deals more with borderline cases, not with the routine[30]. So then, we could easily acknowledge that, Schmitt's attempt for positing the notion of sovereignty in reference to the state of exception marks a radical break from the classical traditional approach of the Western political theory that strives to ground the notion of sovereignty strictly in the domain of law, and topically from the liberal tradition through which the norm of law is posited as a precondition for the possibility of the exercise of (state) power. In Schmitt's own words:

> All law is "situational law." The sovereign produces and guarantees the situation in its totality. He has the monopoly over this last decision. Therein resides the essence of the state's sovereignty, which must be juristically defined correctly, not as the monopoly to coerce or to rule, but as the monopoly to decide. The exception reveals most clearly the essence of the state's authority. The decision parts here from the legal norm, and (to

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commissarial dictatorship. On the other hand, the sovereign dictatorship involves a minimum or a latent form of the legal norm that is applied but not in force. (Agamben, 2005)

[30] Although, for Schmitt, this does not mean that such a definition of sovereignty stands operational only in those cases of *state of emergency* or *state of siege*. On the contrary, it refers to a general concept in his theory of the state. Schmitt argues that, in order to understand the routine rule or order in an appropriate way, one must understand the exception. Indeed, the renowned first chapter of his Political Theology ends with a quotation from Søren Kierkegaard:

> The exception explains the general and itself. And if one wants to study the general correctly, one only needs to look around for a true exception. It reveals everything more dearly than does the general. Endless talk about the general becomes boring; there are exceptions. If they cannot be explained, then the general also cannot be explained. The difficulty is usually not noticed because the general is not thought about with passion but with a comfortable superficiality. The exception, on the other hand, thinks the general with intense passion. (Schmitt, 2005, p. 15)

In short, for Schmitt, "[t]he rule proves nothing; the exception proves everything: It confirms not only the rule but also its existence, which derives only from the exception" (Schmitt, 2005, p. 15)

> formulate it paradoxically) authority proves that to produce law it need not be based on law. (Schmitt, 2005, p. 13)

At this point, we detect a central paradox that lies at the very heart of Schmitt's thought: The normal state of affairs, a state that is believed to be governed on the basis of the rule of law, is always grounded upon a concealed element which carries the very possibility of law's suspension. In Slavoj Žižek's words, "the rule of law ultimately hinges on an abyssal act of violence (violent imposition) which is grounded in itself; that is, every positive order to which this act refers, to legitimize itself, is self-referentially posited by this act itself" (Žižek, 1999, p. 18). From Schmitt's perspective, authority proves that to produce law it need not be based on law. In the end, the one who suspends the law and forcefully produces those effects which will sustain order or domination wields and possesses the political power or, in other words, is the sovereign.

4.3.2 Foucault with Schmitt

Agamben's reworking of the concept of biopolitics could be better understood as an attempt of reading the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics with the Schmittian notion of sovereignty. However, between Foucault and Schmitt, there exists a stark difference which is very hard to neglect. Such a difference is not only due to their conflicting political views and engagements, but more importantly, it is due to the fact that their theoretical perspectives are constituted in a highly-differentiated way.

Conversely, let's start with some similarities that could be attributed to both Foucault and Schmitt's approaches. First of all, for both thinkers, politics appears as a dynamic domain that is host to various forms of struggles and confrontations. For Foucault, politics is primarily understood in terms of the operationality of relations of power (and resistance). When it comes to Schmitt's account, his notion of the

political is no other than the distinction that is posited between the figures of the friend and the enemy. Thus, from Schmitt's perspective, politics is formulated as an endless struggle between friends and enemies. It is also important to mention here that both Foucault and Schmitt reject understanding politics through the lens of the law: Foucault explicitly refuses to posit the model of law as an appropriate analytical framework for analyzing relations of power. For Schmitt, legal order is both produced and maintained by the constituent power of the sovereign.

However, beyond these two similar aspects, both the paths Foucault and Schmitt follow and the final destinations they eventually arrive at are considerably different, even to the extent that it would not be at odds to argue that their perspectives are intrinsically opposed.[31] From Foucault's perspective, power is conceptualized primarily as an action upon actions, that means power is conceptualized precisely as a relation that operates through the grassroots of the social. And, an appropriate analysis of how relations of power operate always requires a perspective that is produced by understanding what is fragmentary, local, and relational. On the other hand, what we have on Schmitt's side is his decisionistic centralism. In the end it could be said that, while "Schmitt retains a fundamentally vertical or top-down model of power . . . Foucault's approach is precisely meant to be a challenge to these hierarchically structured conceptualizations of force, authority, and political control" (Debrix & Barder, 2012, p. 31).

Then, without any doubt, fusing Foucault and Schmitt's ideas in an eclectic way would yield highly problematic outcomes. On the other hand, there is also a chance for establishing a ground for highly enriching and productive discussions by

[31] In *Nothing is Political, Everything Can Be Politicized: On the Concept of the Political in Michel Foucault and Carl Schmitt*, Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky explains such a difference in terms of Schmitt's decisionism and Foucault's nominalism (Deuber-Mankowsky, 2008).

way of reading Schmitt with Foucault or reading Foucault with Schmitt. However, such a theoretical project requires a major reformulation or reinterpretation of both thinkers' work. Indeed, I think that, this is no other than what Agamben has tried to achieve throughout his reworking of both Foucault and Schmitt's ideas in his reformulation of the notion of biopolitics. In the following pages, I will discuss to what extent Agamben's attempt for reformulation of biopolitics captures what is vital for our contemporary context and whether his reworking is successful or not.

4.3.3 Zoē and bios

The first important theme that needs to be highlighted in Agamben's theoretical framework is the distinction he posits between the concepts of *zoē* and *bios*. Or more precisely, what I would like to highlight is how the difference between the concepts of zoē and bios gives name to the main line of separation that the Western political tradition has been built upon. Both concepts have their roots in the Greek antiquity and together they designate a two-folded conceptualization of life. In Agamben's words:

> The Greeks had no single term to express what we mean by the word "life." They used two terms that, although traceable to a common etymological root, are semantically and morphologically distinct: zoē, which expressed the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods), and bios, which indicated the form or way of living proper to an individual or a group. (Agamben, 1998, p. 1)

So, how does this claim, the distinction between zoē and bios which is thought to be constituting the main line of separation that the Western political tradition has been built upon, function in Agamben's account? Agamben comes to this very conclusion topically by way of tracing this theme throughout Aristotle's writings on the origins of the *polis*, especially in reference to Aristotle's *The Politics* (Aristotle, 1992) where he discusses the extent of the good life in terms of the participation in a political

community, in other words, the polis. More concisely, what Agamben locates in Aristotle's account could be formulated in the following manner: On the one hand, the concept of bios, that is the qualified form of life, stands at the center of the constitution of political community, or in other words bios is always conceptualized in terms of *bios politikos*. On the other hand, in the context of polis "to speak of a zoē politikē of the citizens of Athens would have made no sense" (Agamben, 1998, p. 1). So then, zoē, the term that designates the natural or biological life, is conceptualized in a way that it is excluded from political designs. However, does this mean that biological life is completely overlooked by the Greeks? The answer is no. Indeed, life in terms of zoē appears as confined to the private sphere, to the sphere of the *oikos* (household) and understood only in terms "the reproduction and the subsistence of life" (Agamben, 1998, p. 2) without denoting any political significance.

For Agamben, the central importance of the distinction between zoē and bios does not solely reside in a separation between the biological life and the political life. It indicates that the constitution of the political community depends on the very condition of the exclusion of natural life from the domain of the political. However, this very exclusion of natural life from the domain of political is a more complex phenomenon: From Agamben's perspective, life "is simultaneously excluded from, and included in, the sphere of politics and, further, this 'inclusive exclusion' forms the foundation of" the political community (Mills, 2018, p. 39).

Indeed, what Agamben sees in this relationship of inclusion of the biological life by its very exclusion from the domain of the political is the very foundation of Western political tradition. In short, if one is inclined to posit the ancient Greek polis as the site from which Western politics flourishes, as Agamben seems to be doing,

then it would not to be farfetched to argue that Western politics is founded upon the exclusion of the biological life, which is set outside the domain of the political but at the same time inscribed in it in a concealed manner.[32] At this point, a highly crucial question arises: So then, in what terms should one think the politicization of life from such a theoretical standpoint that is informed by the distinction between the concepts of zoē and bios? This is the exact point of departure for Agamben when he conceptualizes the notions of *sovereign ban* and *bare life*.

4.3.4 Sovereign ban and production of bare life

Agamben locates the concept of bare life in the enigmatic figure of *homo sacer* (sacred man) which is derived from the archaic Roman law. Let me start with giving a concise account of what the notion of homo sacer implies in Agamben's writings. The following is the quotation that Agamben takes from Pompeius Festus's *De Verborum Significatione* (On the Significance of Words) where the notion of homo sacer is explicitly defined:

> The sacred man is the one whom the people have judged on account of a crime. It is not permitted to sacrifice this man, yet he who kills him will not be condemned for homicide; in the first tribunitian law, in fact, it is noted that "if someone kills the one who is sacred according to the plebiscite, it will not be considered homicide." This is why it is customary for a bad or impure man to be called sacred. (Agamben, 1998, p. 71)

This definition renders the figure of homo sacer as highly intriguing. Homo sacer is the personae who "can be killed but not sacrificed" (Agamben, 1998, p. 101). At the first sight, what seems to be as obvious is no other than the apparent abandonment of the figure of homo sacer, both in relation to the profane and the sacred law: Killing homo sacer is by no means deemed as an act of homicide and sacrificing him is not

[32] It seems to me important to note here the way in which Agamben displaces the Schmittian friend-enemy distinction with the distinction between the *bios* and *zoē*, in other words, between the qualified form of life and natural life as the very distinction that the political stands to be founded upon.

permitted. In short, homo sacer stands as the figure who is both banished from the domain of the political as well as the religious.

However, perhaps the single most important aspect of Agamben's conceptualization of homo sacer is directly related with the question of how the status of life that is attributed to this very figure should be understood. Or, if I put it in more precise terms: Could the life of homo sacer be subsumable under the categories of bios and zoē? It is relatively easy to see that, the life of homo sacer could not be thought under the category of bios. Indeed, the figure of homo sacer appears to be located at the exact opposite pole of what the qualified form of life could ever stand for. When it comes to whether the category of zoē fulfils to correspond to this very condition or not, things start getting a bit more complicated than it is in the case of life in terms of the notion of bios. As we have discussed above, Agamben argues that the political community, at least since from the ancient Greek polis (which is in the end posited by Agamben as the very foundation which the Western politics rests upon), has been established by way of the exclusion of the biological life from the domain of the political but at the same time inscribing it in a hidden way, that is, by the very relationship of its exclusion. However, from this exclusion from the domain of political does the dismantling of life necessarily follow?

From Agamben's perspective, the answer to this question could be formulated in the following way: Homo sacer's life could not be thought as being the exact same thing with zoē. Indeed, one could better situate the life of the figure of homo sacer in relation to the politicization of zoē, in other words, politicization of the biological or natural life; or better yet we could locate it in the concept of bare life. Then it could be said that, for Agamben, the concept of bare life stands at the very threshold that

distinguishes zoē from bios, the natural life from the social life. It seems to me to be extremely important to highlight here that the concept of "bare life does not refer to a natural, original or ahistorical nakedness but presents an artificial product" (Lemke, 2005, p. 5).

At this point, I would like to take a short break and try to summarize what we have covered up until now: First, Agamben argues that the Western political tradition has its foundation in the separation that is posited between zoē and bios. And second, for Agamben, the notion of bare life, which he locates in the enigmatic figure of homo sacer that is derived from the archaic Roman law, is the politicized form of natural life that is located at the very threshold that distinguishes zoē from bios. In other words, throughout Agamben's account, the production of bare life could be better understood as the originary political relationship. From here on, I think what needs to be done is to focus our attention on the question of in what terms the politicization of the natural life takes place, or if I put it differently, in what terms bare life is to be produced.

Indeed, this is the exact point in Agamben's theoretical framework where the concept of sovereignty enters into the scene. For Agamben, the bare life has been born under the sign of sovereignty, especially in the very act of banishment that is enacted by the sovereign power on the bare life: "bare life emerges through the irreparable exposure of life to death in the sovereign ban, such that the politicization of life is ultimately nothing other than its exposure to death, particularly in and through sovereign violence." (Mills, 2018, p.45). Then one could argue that in Agamben's notion of bare life there is something in excess of a relationship of exclusion. Indeed, Agamben theorizes the notion of bare life in a *relation of ban*. So

then, what is the specificity of the relation of ban and what distinguishes it from being a relation of exclusion from Agamben's perspective? In his own words:

> [W]ho has been banned is not, in fact, simply set outside the law and made indifferent to it but rather abandoned by it, that is, exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable. It is literally not possible to say whether the one who has been banned is outside or inside the juridical order. (Agamben, 1998, p. 28)

In other words, bare life is not only excluded from the domain of the juridico-political but also inscribed in it in a concealed way. Or, if I put it in a better way, the bare life stands to be situated in a *zone of indistinction*.[33]

While bare life is located at the very margins of the domain of the political, it stands as the very foundation for the political body of sovereignty.[34] Moreover, it is only through its own suspension that the sovereign's law ever "encompasses living beings" (Agamben, 2005, p. 3). Indeed, for Agamben, the production of bare life that is caught in the sovereign ban constitutes the very threshold for the genesis of political community. In other words, from Agamben's perspective, "[t]he original political relation is the ban" (Agamben, 1998, p. 181), and in fact, what has given rise to the juridico-political order is nothing other than this relation of exception or ban. However, the sovereign ban does not simply function as a mechanism of decision over the life and death of those subjects; it establishes the very criteria of who would be recognized as human being at all, in other words, it designates the line

[33] At this very instance, I would like to draw reader's attention to how close Agamben's understanding of the notion of sovereignty in terms of the relation of ban comes to Schmitt's understanding of sovereignty in terms of the state of exception: "The exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule."(Agamben, 1998, p. 18) However, there is an important difference that should be mentioned: Agamben argues in reference to Jean-Luc Nancy's concept of "abandonment" (Nancy, 1993), that "[t]he relation of exception is a relation of ban" (Agamben, 1998, p. 28).

[34] "At the two extreme limits of the order, the sovereign and homo sacer present two symmetrical figures that have the same structure and are correlative: the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially homines sacri, and homo sacer is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns." (Agamben, 1998, p. 84)

of separation between whose life is thought to be deserving to live and whose life is not. As a concluding remark it could be said that, the relation of sovereign ban, the enigmatic inclusion of natural or biological life, is nothing other than the mechanism that life is inscribed in the political, in other words, providing for the very grounds of the politicization of life. In the end, upon this inclusion of bare life by its very exclusion, Agamben asserts that the Western politics finds its solid foundation.

4.3.5 Biopolitics: The camp as the hidden paradigm of modernity

At this very instance, I would like to return to the theme of biopolitics. I would like to pose the following question: Was it not politicization of life at the center of Foucault's theorization of the notion of biopolitics? Departing from this question, we can begin to point out the ways in which Agamben's understanding of biopolitics differentiates from that of Foucault's.

The following passage from *Homo Sacer* is highly informative on how Agamben formulates his understanding of biopolitics:

> [T]he inclusion of bare life in the political realm constitutes the original-if concealed-nucleus of sovereign power. It can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power. In this sense, biopolitics is at least as old as the sovereign exception. (Agamben, 1998, p. 6)

In Agamben's account, unlike Foucault's original claims, there does not exist a crucial distinction between sovereign power and the operationality of biopolitics. On the contrary, Agamben argues that there exists a hidden tie between sovereign power and biopolitics which is built in the relation of the sovereign exception or ban. It is important to note that Agamben seems to be dehistoricizing the notion of biopolitics to a great extent: The emergence of biopolitics no longer marks the threshold of modernity as it was in the case of Foucault's formulation. On the contrary, for Agamben, "Western politics is a biopolitics from the very beginning" (Agamben,

1998, p. 181). So, does not modernity bring a substantial change from Agamben's perspective? Indeed, the following might give an important insight on how Agamben understands this transition:

> Placing biological life at the center of its calculations, the modern State therefore does nothing other than bring to light the secret tie uniting power and bare life, thereby reaffirming the bond (derived from a tenacious correspondence between the modern and the archaic which one encounters in the most diverse spheres) between modern power and the most immemorial of the arcana imperii. (Agamben, 1998, p. 6)

That means, for Agamben, at the first sight, the notion of modernity does not imply a radical break in the history of the Western politics, as it clearly does for Foucault.[35] However, the question of what modernity entails, for Agamben, is not that insignificant either.

Indeed, what Agamben sees in modernity is nothing other than the expansion or intensification of the already existing biopolitical tendency that runs through the Western politics. So then, it could be said that, Agamben seems to be agreeing with Foucault on the subject matter of how the biological gradually comes under the modern state's mechanisms of control since the 18th century, reaching its highest degree in the wake of 20th century.[36] However there is an important difference: What is at stake in Agamben's account is the generalization of bare life in the mechanism of the modern state. For Agamben, the concept of bare life no longer designates the limits of the domain of the political. Instead, in the context of modernity, the notion of the bare life is at the very center of political designs. By way of making a reference to Walter Benjamin's reading of the Schmittian conceptualization of the

[35] As we have discussed in the first chapter, for Foucault, the transition from the regime of sovereign power to that of biopower marks the threshold of modernity. Indeed, he explicitly expresses this point of view in the phrase "modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question" (Foucault, 1978, p. 143)

[36] It is interesting to note here that Agamben's reference point might be Schmitt's notion of the *Totalstaat* (the total state) in which the state and the society permeates each other as well as Foucault's understanding of biopolitics.

state of exception,[37] Agamben argues that, in the context of modernity the state of exception becomes the rule, the dominant paradigm of government especially for our contemporary settings. (Agamben, 2005).

I have mentioned that, for Agamben, the 20th century marks the apex of the biopolitical current that runs through the whole Western political history. So then, I think that we should answer the following question: In what terms, for Agamben, could the notion of biopolitics be seen as finding its highest degree in the political context of the 20th century? Agamben's answer to this question involves how he has understood the totalitarianisms of the 20th century; especially it is related with his analysis of the politics of the National Socialist state where the concentration camp stands at the very heart of its operationality. It seems to me as extremely important to note here that Agamben does not take these experiences of totalitarianism as extreme cases, indeed, for him, they express the hidden kernel of modern politics.[38] It is

[37] Agamben draws his line of argumentation by way of referencing Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (Benjamin, 2007). Especially, it is how the notion of state of exception had been understood in the eighth thesis:

> The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the "state of emergency'' in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight. Then we shall clearly realize that it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency, and this will improve our position in the struggle against Fascism. One reason why Fascism has a chance is that in the name of progress its opponents treat it as a historical norm. The current amazement that the things we are experiencing are "still" possible in the twentieth century is not philosophical. This amazement is not the beginning of knowledge—unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable. (Benjamin, 2007, p.257)

In a very concise manner, from Benjamin's perspective, the notion of the state of exception no longer designates a temporary suspension of the law in order to reinvigorate it as it is in the case of Schmitt's work. On the contrary, for Benjamin, the state of exception denotes a permanent condition through which politics is to be configured.

[38] At this very instance, we could speak of the presence of another point of inflection in Agamben's account from that of Foucault's. In *Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault mentions that:

> Nazism is the product of an extreme state of crisis, the final point towards which an economy and a politics unable to overcome their contradictions are carried, and Nazism as the extreme solution cannot serve as an analytical model for general history, or at any rate for the past history of capitalism in Europe. (Foucault, 2008, p. 110)

especially the logic and the operationality of the concentration camp, which has drawn the absolute line that separates whose life is to be regarded as deserving to live and whose is not, and which has produced the purest embodiment of the bare life, the *muselmann* (Agamben, 2008). In short, for Agamben, the concentration camp stands to be constituting the hidden paradigm of the modern biopolitics. In Agamben's own words:

> Insofar as its inhabitants were stripped of every political status and wholly reduced to bare life, the camp was also the most absolute biopolitical space ever to have been realized, in which power confronts nothing but pure life, without any mediation. This is why the camp is the very paradigm of political space at the point at which politics becomes biopolitics and *homo sacer* is virtually confused with the citizen. (Agamben, 1998, p. 171)

From Agamben's perspective, the concentration camp is by no means an expression of a distant memory, on the contrary, it is an "event that repeats itself on a daily basis" (Panagia, 1999, p. 3). Indeed, from the Abu Ghraib prison to the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, to more recent immigrant camps, such a tendency seems to be haunting the very configurations of contemporary politics.

Perhaps Agamben's way of formulating the concentration camp as the paradigm of biopolitics could be clearly understood from the following phrase: "The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule" (Agamben, 1998, pp. 168-9). This implicates that the concentration camp continues to haunt our political contexts as an ever-present threat that exists in a virtual way. And, if we recall how Agamben characterizes the modern political order in terms of the permanent or the generalized state of exception, the model of the concentration camp should not to be thought as limited to definite spatio-temporal

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For Agamben, *the extreme solution* is the hidden paradigm of both modern biopolitics as well as modern politics.

instances. Contemporary or the modern biopolitics carries the very risk of the actualization of the concentration camp. And, by this very reason there does not exist a definitive criterion that distinguishes modern biopolitics from thanatopolitics. In the end, for Agamben, "in our age all citizens can be said, in a specific but extremely real sense, to appear virtually as *homines sacri*" (Agamben, 1998, p. 111).

4.4 Conclusion

To what extent, does Agamben's reformulation of the notion of biopolitics be seen as a successful attempt for establishing an appropriate theoretical perspective for understanding our present in its two tendencies of the advent of authoritarian political regimes and the emergence of the different modalities of intensified political violence?

Let me start with the possible advantages of adopting Agamben's theoretical perspective. Perhaps the single most important aspect of Agamben's account is the following: The way Agamben resurrects the Schmittian notion of sovereignty, by way of putting an emphasis on the state of exception, beyond any doubt opens a highly productive dimension for discussing the configuration of contemporary politics. Indeed, Agamben's account could be seen as highly successful in explicating the apparent exceptionalism that haunts our contemporary settings. Moreover, Agamben's understanding of biopolitics could be regarded as to be overcoming the very weakness that could be attributed to both those who try to locate the notion of biopolitics in the conceptual framework of (neo)liberal governmentality and Hardt and Negri's conceptualization of biopolitical production. As we have discussed earlier, both these accounts stand as highly promising as they succeed in analyzing the operationality of non-centralized socio-political institutions

and governmental practices that have culminated in the making of socio-political contexts of late capitalism. However, both accounts seem to be somehow falling short in the face of the recent developments that has taken place in recent years which bring death and destruction into middle of the political scene. Through its emphasis on the biopolitical characteristic of the production of bare life and the sovereign exception, Agamben's account seems to be capturing what is vital in the configuration of our contemporary socio-political settings.

Nevertheless, there are some serious issues in Agamben's account that need to be addressed. First of all, Agamben's account seems to be marked by an extreme degree of negativity. Or, in more precise terms, as long as Agamben posits the very foundation of the political community in terms of a relation of ban, any possibility for analysis of the exercise of relations of power seems to be trapped in a purely negative perspective. It could be conveniently argued that, from Agamben's theoretical perspective, the exercise of power is a purely an instance of domination, coercion, or repression. And, posing the following question seems to me as legitimate: Is this not what Foucault convincingly argues against when he strives to posit his understanding of the concept of power? As long as the notion of power is conceptualized in a purely negative manner as it is in Agamben's work, any technology of power directly functions as a tool for maintaining the subjugated status of subjects without even trying to give an account of productive aspects.[39] When it

[39] It is interesting to note here that in *Improper Life: Technology and Biopolitics from Heidegger to Agamben* (Campbell, 2011), Timothy Campbell argues that this is the direct result of Agamben's understanding of technology in Heideggerian terms (which primarily stands as a destructive force). Indeed, we could grasp such a tendency from what Agamben seems to understand from the Foucauldian notion of *dispositif*:

> Further expanding the already large class of Foucauldian apparatuses, I shall call an apparatus literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourses of living beings. Not only, therefore, prisons, mad houses, the panopticon, schools, confession, factories, disciplines, juridical measures, and so forth (whose connection with power is in a

comes to the way Agamben reformulates the notion of biopolitics, it is no secret then why he fails to distinguish the difference between the regimes of sovereign power and biopolitics (which as well as Foucault, Hardt and Negri succeed to locate).

Second, it is the privileged status attributed to the notion of sovereignty in Agamben's works. Indeed, throughout Agamben's writings, the very integrity of the political domain is sustained by the extra-juridical violence, in other words, the capacity for enacting the state of exception of the sovereign. Moreover, the foundation of the political community is grounded on the operationality of the sovereign ban. Here what I would like to problematize is not the apparent negativity that lurks behind these claims, but the very explanatory model that is given to us. In more precise terms, such a way of formulation of the operationality of the sovereign power depends upon a highly vertical schema, which only operates from the top to bottom. What is overlooked seems to be the actual mechanisms which function at the grassroots level, and what makes the livelihood of the structure of sovereignty possible. In other words, unlike Foucault, who "shows that sovereign power is by no means sovereign, since its legitimacy and efficiency depends on a "microphysics of power"" (Lemke, 2005, p. 9), Agamben's understanding of sovereignty seems to be

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> certain sense evident), but also the pen, writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, cigarettes, navigation, computers, cellular telephones and-why not-language itself, which is perhaps the most ancient of apparatuses-one in which thousands and thousands of years ago a primate inadvertently let himself be captured, probably without realizing the consequences that he was about to face. (Agamben, 2009, p. 14)

And, from Agamben's perspective, the functioning of dispositifs function in the following way:

> Contemporary societies therefore present themselves as inert bodies going through massive processes of desubjectification without acknowledging any real subjectification. Hence the eclipse of politics, which used to presuppose the existence of subjects and real identities (the workers' movement, the bourgeoisie, etc.), and the triumph of the oikonomia, that is to say, of a pure activity of government that aims at nothing other than its own replication. The Right and the Left, which today alternate in the management of power, have for this reason very little to do with the political sphere in which they originated. (Agamben, 2009, p. 22)

trapped in the Western political tradition which might be characterized in terms of an obsession with the sovereign personae.

Lastly, I want to highlight another important problematic issue that is encountered in Agamben's account. This time it is surprisingly related with the inadequacy of Agamben's theoretical perspective for giving a clear understanding of the operationality of contemporary modalities of political violence. As Abbas Vali recently discusses, while Agamben's understanding of the state of exception (as a rule) successfully designates a zone of indistinction between the exercise of extra-juridical violence and the operation of the political order, it hardly succeeds in giving an adequate analytical perspective for explaining the permanent or persistent political crises, especially those that have taken the form of civil wars (Vali, 2018). Indeed, it can be proposed that this lacuna is directly related with the failure of Agamben's perspective to give an account of the notion of resistance. Throughout Agamben's account the possibility for emergence of resistance seems to be postponed indefinitely, only in its own bare existence, or only in terms of a last-ditch effort. The concept of sovereignty appears as an all-encompassing political entity. As a result, the exercise of violence, to a great extent, is attributed to the sovereign in an uniliteral way. However, what we are facing today, is in some sense the democratization of violence, which means that it is very difficult to speak of sovereign's monopoly over the means of violence.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to draw a broad outline of the debate between some of the most prominent contemporary social and political theories that are generated around the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics. However, it is important to mention here that I do not pretend to argue that this inquiry covers the whole range of discussions around this concept. Indeed, my primary question was that of how the notion of biopolitics could serve us as an analytical perspective in understanding our contemporary social and political settings. At this point, I would like to give a brief summary of what we have covered up in our discussions up until now.

I have started with trying to elaborate the issue of how Michel Foucault conceptualizes the notion of power: Power, for Foucault, is "the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault, 1978 p.93), and it is indeed a specific type of relationship, "a way in which some act on others", and "exists only as exercised by some on others" (Foucault, 2000d, p. 340). And, perhaps the most important aspect of Foucault's conceptualization is how he formulates power as "a productive network that runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression" (Foucault, 2000e, p. 120).

Then, I have moved on to explain what the notion of biopolitics implies throughout Foucault's works: A reconfiguration that has taken place in the order of politics, or more accurately a historical shift that has situated biological life at the center of the relations of power and political strategies in Western societies beginning from the late 18th century which operated via techniques and procedures of

the newly born modern State which have regularizing effects on the population. More importantly, for Foucault, the notion of biopolitics has implied the transition from the logic of sovereign power "the right to take life or let live" (Foucault, 1978, p. 136) to that of biopower "a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death" (Foucault, 1978, p. 138). Indeed, this was the exact point why Foucault's account was so controversial. The crucial problematic of how to explain the phenomena of death seems to encircle a lacuna in the theoretical framework of biopolitics. As we have discussed, apart from the notion of state racism, Foucault's position on this issue remains uncertain.

Since my primary aim is that of interrogating how the notion of biopolitics is utilized in order to make sense of contemporary social and political world, I have put an emphasis on two themes. First theme is related to the question of how to understand the developments that have taken place in the epoch, which might be called in terms of late capitalism, namely the seemingly unstoppable advent of neoliberalism, the expansion of capitalism to the global scale, and the diffusion of the market relations to the almost all aspects of social life. Second, theme is related to the question of how the notion of biopolitics could be utilized in our very present which is marked by intensified political violence and authoritarian models of government.

I have critically reassessed Thomas Lemke's suggestion for reframing the notion of biopolitics within the broader theoretical framework that is generated by the notion of governmentality, in terms the government of the living under the context of neoliberalism. I have addressed some important discrepancies between the ways that Foucault has formulated biopolitics and liberal governmentality. And, I have come to conclusion that while Lemke's suggestion is a step that is taken in the

right direction, nevertheless it is not sufficient on its own. In other words, what is needed is nothing other than a reformulation of the notion of biopolitics itself, especially reframing its operationality beyond the regulative mechanisms of the state and the apparatus of police.

Indeed, this was the exact point that, I have introduced Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's major reformulation of the notion of biopolitics. As we have thoroughly discussed, from Hardt and Negri's perspective, the notion of biopolitics corresponds to a two-folded operationality: One the one hand, biopolitics in terms of a regime of biopower, designates a decentralized regime of control, a novel form of domination, and an intensified condition of exploitation of labor as capitalism now extends even to the remotest corners of the globe. However, on the other hand, in terms of the biopolitical production, biopolitics also marks an immense step that is taken in the socialization of labor, which renders the role of the capitalist class completely parasitic and unnecessary which in the end opens up a possibility for the emergence of the post-capitalist democracy, in other words creates the very conditions of the communism yet to come. However, I have concluded that, what stands to be overlooked in Hardt and Negri's account was that of the destructive and lethal aspect that is inscribed in the notion of biopolitics which Foucault was aware of from the very start.

By way of visiting Giorgio Agamben's perspective I have tried to give a concise account of how the notion of biopolitics could be utilized in order to make sense of our very present, which seems to be invaded by authoritarian regimes that operate on the basis of enacting a permanent state of exception, and on the other hand, haunted by the gruesome and stupefying political violence in varying intensities. What has distinguished Agamben's account is the following: The notion

of biopolitics no longer denotes a condition of which life is invested through and through, and the withdrawal of the sovereign violence. On the contrary, for Agamben, biopolitics is the very name of the violence that is exercised by the sovereign. Indeed, he argues that, throughout the Western politics, sovereignty has always functioned on a biopolitical basis. In a brief way, for Agamben, biopolitics is the process of the production of bare life under the sovereign ban or sovereign exception. While Agamben's perspective seems to be capturing the exceptionalistic character of our contemporary political contexts, however, what seems to be overlooked in Agamben's account is no other than the productive aspects inherent to the notion of biopolitics.

So then, how to conclude now? While I am aware that, it might disappoint some of my readers, I am not willing to draw a definitive conclusion. It this instance I will confine myself to making a couple of concluding remarks and addressing a couple of questions that I hope will open up further research directions: How is it possible to give an account of our present from the conceptual framework informed by the notion of biopolitics beyond both Hardt and Negri and Agamben's perspectives? In other words, is it possible to establish a perspective that encompasses the productive and the destructive biopolitical forces that are at work in the making of our present? In the last instance, one might argue that both Hardt and Negri's, and Agamben's accounts could be regarded as the flip sides of the same coin. While the former seems to be exclusively focusing on the productive or creative capacities of that which could be attributed to biopolitics, the latter takes it only in extremely negative terms. In other words, while Hardt and Negri attribute an overwhelmingly positive meaning to biopolitics as a potential for *exodus*, Agamben formulates the present biopolitics in an extremely negative manner as the harbinger

of the catastrophe yet to come.[40] To be more specific, Hardt and Negri's reading of biopolitics posits the present as a step towards in the path to communism; Agamben takes the present as the cradle of the forthcoming biopolitical catastrophe. I argue that, both of these accounts suffer from the same problem but from different angles, by their very failure to address the present without dramatizing it.

At this point, I suggest that we should pay attention to Michel Foucault's remarkable warning against the temptation of regarding the present as an irruptive moment in history, whether in terms of perdition or triumph; that may hinder one from posing the question of present in its complicity, singularity, and eventuality (Raulet, 1983). As the last words of this inquiry, I would like to finish by noting the necessity for thinking further on the possible points of convergence, or perhaps the terms of convertibility, between the modalities of power that foster life (or, at least, thoroughly invests upon life) and the modalities of violence that are capable of disposing life in unprecedent ways that are fairly visible in our contemporary contexts, rather than attributing too much attention on the question whether the notion of biopolitics should be understood as essentially an emancipative or repressive force.

[40] It is important to mention here that Agamben also points for a way out in his writings: Especially, his concept of *the coming of community* (Agamben, 2007) and his account on the possible new uses and deactivation of law (Agamben, 2005) have a less pessimistic tonality regarding the future. The question of whether and how these discussions introduce complications and displacements to the apparent negativity that Agamben attributes to the notion of biopolitics is an interesting question and something that can be pursued in future studies.

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