

WE ARE AT WAR: FROM RETHORICS TO CONFRONTATION IN A MILITARIZED SOCIETY¹

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ABSTRACT. From the problematic of violence that ‘assaults us’ in contemporary times, we offer a reflection on the Brazilian context, taking as a theoretical instrument the analysis of power relations addressed by Michel Foucault in his lecture *Em defesa da sociedade*, at the Collège de France, in 1976. The present study aimed to advocate the hypothesis that the public security policies adopted by the Rio de Janeiro State are not uniform, and that the forces used in the name of peace, the pacification process, are unequally distributed across the population. This premise throws us into a question that we understand to be fundamental to the understanding of the present, namely, what are the mechanisms, tactics and techniques that ensure state power to use force and violence against its own citizens?

Keywords: Foucault; war; power.

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RESUMO. A partir da problemática da violência que nos ‘toma por assalto’ na contemporaneidade, faremos uma reflexão sobre o contexto brasileiro tendo por instrumento teórico a analítica das relações de poder empreendida por Michel Foucault no curso *Em defesa da sociedade*, ministrado no Collège de France, em 1976. Buscaremos sustentar neste artigo a hipótese de que a política de segurança pública adotada pelo Estado do Rio de Janeiro não é uniforme, e as forças despendidas em nome da paz, do projeto de pacificação, distribuem-se de forma desigual entre a população. Esse pressuposto nos arremessa em uma questão que entendemos ser fundamental para a compreensão do presente, a saber, quais os mecanismos, táticas e técnicas que asseguram ao poder de Estado o uso da força e da violência contra os seus próprios cidadãos?

Palavras-chave: Foucault; guerra; poder.

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ESTAMOS EN GUERRA: DE LA RETÓRICA AL ENFRENTAMIENTO EN UN COTIDIANO MILITARIZADO

RESUMEN. A partir de la problemática de la violencia que nos ‘toma por asalto’ en la contemporaneidad, haremos una reflexión sobre el contexto brasileño, amparados en el instrumental teórico y analítico de las relaciones de poder formulado por Michel Foucault en el curso *Em defesa da sociedade*, ofrecido en el Collège de France, en 1976. Buscaremos mostrar la hipótesis según la cual la política de seguridad pública adoptada por el Estado de Río de Janeiro no es uniforme y que las fuerzas desplegadas en nombre de la paz, del proyecto de pacificación, se distribuyen en forma desigual entre la población. Este presupuesto nos sitúa em una cuestión que consideramos fundamental para la comprensión de nuestro presente: ¿cuáles son los mecanismos, tácticas y técnicas que aseguran al poder del Estado el uso de la fuerza y de la violencia en contra de sus propios ciudadanos?

Palabras clave: Foucault; guerra; poder.

Introduction

In 2007, the then-governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Sergio Cabral, gave a press interview about abortion. In his view, abortion should be legalized and integrated into public health policies. The reason: reducing crime rates. The relationship is straightforward, with no faulty and inaccurate terms. Birth control in poor areas of the city would have a positive impact on reducing violence because, according to the governor, the birth rate in these places – he refers specifically to the Favela of Rocinha, the women of Rocinha – would be close to countries like ‘Zambia, Gabon’. Therefore, he concludes that the slum “[...] is a factory to produce criminal people” (Cabral, 2007).

In 2017, the newspaper *Extra*, widely circulated in Rio de Janeiro, creates a war editorial to allocate news that escapes the ‘normalcy’ of urban violence. Based on a ‘secret’ state dossier, the mainstream media outlets bring to the public the exact number of territories lost to organized crime: 843. According to Octavio Guedes, editor-in-chief of *Extra*, “[...] to solve the problem it is necessary to call it by the correct term”. The violent deaths caused by the rifle, the widows of police officers, the mothers who mourn the loss of their dead children at schools, all these facts support the newspaper’s argument that the state has already lost control, even in territories that were believed to be ‘pacified’ by the *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora*, UPPs. For the director of the newspaper, the population that inhabits these territories is subdued, “[...] below the rule of democratic law” [sic]. So he says, “[...] there’s nothing to talk about, we’re at war! [...]” And the war, he completes, “[...] it’s time, it’s resource, it’s got to have strategy” (Editorial, 2017).

2018. President Michel Temer decrees federal intervention in the area of public security in Rio de Janeiro on the grounds of the need to “[...] face and defeat organized crime”. The danger that threatens the whole of society is drawn by his words: “[...] a metastasis that spreads across the country and threatens the tranquility of our people”. The ‘extreme’ solution stands in the face of the nature of the problem, “[...] circumstances require it [...]”, so that “[...] hard, firm answers [...]” are used. Temer is emphatic in stating that “[...] we cannot passively accept the death of innocents...so enough is enough!”. The president

continues his speech, highlighting now what is at stake: “[...] we will not accept that they kill our present or continue to assassinate our future”. Thus, he continues, “[...] the intervener will have the power to restore the tranquility of the people [...] the police and the armed forces [...], together they will fight, confront and defeat those who kidnap our cities from the people”. Under intervention, there is no doubt that there is a scrutinized battlefield, since “[...] disorder is the worst of wars. We have begun a battle in which our only path can only be success” (Temer, 2018)

In the three examples above, a rhetoric is outlined that makes war coincide as a principle of analysis (1) of the relations of political power and (2) the provision, formation of social space, with metaphors that appeal to the singular body made object of care and intervention in the face of a disease that plagues it. Disordered birth rate, organized crime, conflicted territories, violence, metastasis, life, death, war, strategy, confrontation, defeat. All words used in speeches and pronouncements that attempt to legitimize a state policy that imposes horror and violence on a specific portion of the population according to their calculations of force and confrontation.

In this context, we may ask: is the war enunciated only metaphorical? If not, what are the assumptions that sustain and legitimize a war? What are the valences of this combat? What trench is outlined forming clusters and analyzing the social space? How is this war of the state carried out? Does the model of war offer, as stated by the French philosopher Michel Foucault (2010, p. 16) in his lecture *Em defesa da sociedade*, a “[...] template of intelligibility [...]” from which we can think of the relations of the present? Is war the last trench of politics, what bears its failure, or, on the contrary, what makes it possible?

War and failure of politics

From the aphorism of the German general and war theorist Carl Von Clausewitz, according to whom war is the continuation of politics by other means, Michel Foucault (2010) undertakes an analysis of power relations shifting from philosophical-legal analyses, which have sovereignty as their paradigm, to find another way of thinking, not Power, but the relations that enable it, that effect it, that invest it and counter it. From the philosophical-legal model based on sovereignty with its related terms, namely, contract, natural law, serfdom, Foucault brings out, from genealogy, the historical-political paradigm on the basis of which mechanisms that effect power, the techniques of domination, the tactics of subjection, the game of forces that crosses and stitches the social fabric, the clashes and confrontations around power, by power and from power.

From the outset, Foucault (2010, p. 15) reverses Clausewitz’s aphorism. War will not be the continuation of otherwise invested politics, but rather the opposite: “[...] politics is war continued by other means”. Are we thus in a permanent state of war, as stated by the best-known sovereign theorist, Thomas Hobbes? To whom, then, would the German general’s proposition serve?

The philosophical problem theorized by Hobbes arises from the question of the legal foundations of power for securing sovereignty on a solid and comfortable basis, since this regime of power would have as its founding and legitimate moment the contract established between the various individualities in order to ensure life of all. Hovering over this multiple (seemingly contradictory) and atomized mass would be the sovereign as a mythical entity, possessing the powers granted to him, legislating over the subjects. The pact for fear, freedom for security, law and legislation over nature; power and what exceeds it in the form

of oppression. This is the problem of sovereignty. What is sought with the foundation of *Leviathan*, supported by the legal-political discourse, is not to avoid widespread and unrestricted warfare in the social body, but according to Foucault (2010, p. 24) “[...] to dissolve, within the power, the fact that domination [...]” at the very moment when the legitimate character of sovereignty and the obligation to serve are stressed.

To this discourse, therefore, located between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which seeks to maintain the sovereign from the rule of law and legislation, serves Clausewitz’s aphorism: war is the continuation of politics by other means. We can read otherwise: obedience or barbarism. In this sense, the structure of political power would begin with the silencing of arms, the cessation of noise and storms caused by war. However, this war of all against all in which the state intervenes and constitutes the nucleus of pacification does not refer, warns Foucault (2010, p. 43), “[...] to the blood and mud of battles [...]”, to the horror of disputes, to victories uprooted in real combat.

The war enunciated by Hobbes and the contractualist jurists is a war of representation, an endless attempt to maintain the pacification of the social body, to appease the disputes and virtual clashes that bear the overthrow of sovereign power. War between equals, in which the “[...] anarchy of small differences” (Foucault, 2010, p. 76) exposes ideal forces that are unknown and rival in an environment of uncertainty, risk, and fear, composing “[...] the random in the primitive relationship of forces that creates this state of war” (Foucault, 2010, p. 76).

Readiness for war, willingness to war, calculation of forces: moments of the representational theater of the primitive war of Hobbes, which highlight the randomness of the power relations in dispute and establish the state of war, not War, whose space is not the battle, neither is the time the combat. Rather, what Foucault (2010, p. 78) calls “[...] primary diplomacy [...]” governed by will, linked to fear. Therefore, we draw the philosophical-legal model of sovereignty whose principle of effectuation is “[...] a certain radical will that makes one want to live even when one cannot live without the will of another” (Foucault, 2010, p. 81). Sovereignty that is formed by an act of will from below, from the tentacles and extremities of the body riddled with fear. Thus, a philosophical-legal discourse that seeks to appease the disputes, eliminate the history of the struggles, the reactivation of knowledge about war, the related behaviors and the resulting effects on laws and institutions regulating power.

The aim of the silencing imposed by the Hobbesian theory, according to the French philosopher, is the war with its own game of forces, the possibility of reversing the polarity that this game carries, the disputes, the conquests and the victories.

You wanted it, you are the subjects who constituted the sovereignty that represents you. You no longer bother us, therefore, with your historical recollections: at the end of the conquest (if you really wish there was a conquest) you will still find the contract, the frightened will of the subjects (Hobbes apud Foucault, 2010, p. 82-83).

What is at stake in the philosophical-legal theory of sovereignty is the silence of the disruptive forces that intend to rise up against the state, the attempt to rewrite the lament of the oppressed in history, the very possibility of another history. Outside the state, the *Leviathan*, the Law, the Sovereign, there is no way out. War is the continuation of politics by other means. If one refuses the legal structure of the policy invested and embodied in the sovereign, one finds the war of all against all; the massacre, the death. Refusal to risk life, preference for life over death.

However, another discourse announces itself and reverses these terms: politics as a continuation of war by other means (Foucault, 2010). We are in the historical-political discourse that is formed in the sixteenth century, facing the paradigm that Clausewitz takes inside out to uphold sovereignty. What power does this speech speak? How it works?

War as a political principle

Foucault's analysis of power, as mentioned earlier, abandons the reference to the sovereignty-obedience pair to bring up the problem of domination-subjection. No longer seeking in the legal edifice the rules of law that sustain power and impose it vertically, but undertake an examination of what goes beyond these relationships, the multiplicities that constitute power, the capillarities and ramifications that form a set of institutions, networks, knowledge, techniques, tactics, subjection strategies. In other words, to seek to understand the bodies of subjects thus constituted by the effects of power, to trace the relations of subjection that the subjects produce from domination procedures (Foucault, 2010). Hence the reference to the binary model that war offers.

Politics as a continuation of war by other means. Therefore, the war as first and endless. This is the thread by which Foucault's thought develops (2010) in *Em defesa da sociedade*, which, based on genealogical work, will seek in the history of peoples the reactivation of knowledge about war, the inscription in the order of speeches from the wiles of battle, the struggle, the clashes fought, the contending forces, the blood-stained power relations and the power effects that this reactivated knowledge imposes on the order of politics.

Such knowledge takes shape with the end of the Middle Ages, when, paradoxically, war is expelled to the borders of the kingdom and, concomitantly, it constitutes a military apparatus whose function is war. Private warfare between the various components is ceased and in its place it is centralized war as the state law. Foucault (2010, p. 41) locates the emergence of the historical-political discourse in which war appears as the foundation of social relations at a time when "[...] the whole social body was cleansed of those bellicose relations that completely permeated it".

As a principle of analysis, the French thinker takes the inversion of the terms. He inverts, turns inside out to show what is hidden under the consensus of law and peace. The law is born from war, which, in turn, finds no end there.

The law is not pacification, for under the law war continues to wreak havoc within all mechanisms of power, even the most regular ones. War is the engine of institutions and order: peace, in the smallest of gears, makes war warily. In other words, war must be deciphered under peace: war is the very figure of peace. Therefore we are at war with each other; a battlefield runs through the whole society, continuously and permanently, and it is that battlefield that places each of us on one field or the other. There is no neutral subject. We are necessarily opponents of someone (Foucault, 2010, p. 43).

The first consequence of this historical-political discourse is the binarization of society, cut in two: one loser, the other winner; one with its deeds and facts numbered and decked; the other, forgotten. In this discourse, there is a 'we' that articulates and recomposes itself in the order of battle, weaves trenches, presents weapons and claims singular rights: of the family, race, the right of social superiority or the precedence of power, the right of invasions, millenary achievements and occupations. At this point, Foucault converges relations of force and relations of truth. The subject of historical-political discourse, unlike the philosophers of sovereignty theory, is the subject involved in battle. Political-history because it seeks to

conjure memory and use it as a political weapon. It is therefore a matter of inserting history into the domains of law.

In view of this, the historian Henri de Boulainvilliers, commissioned by the King of France Louis XIV, will make a historiography of the kingdom not in the mold of a monumental history to enhance the brilliance and glory of the sovereign, the glorious history of power, but to highlight which he conceals and which will consequently serve the reactionary nobility. The cry of the speech of this representative of the decaying French aristocracy focuses on his class and calls for reopening memory, becoming aware, recovering knowledge and knowledge about himself in order to regain the power from which the monarch and the bourgeoisie had been expropriated.

According to Foucault (2010), by making the historiography of France, the genealogy of the Frankish people, of the Gallo-Romans, the clashes between the various races, the struggles and conquests, Boulainvilliers reactivated the historical-political discourse and spread the war throughout the whole social body; generalization of the war that lays the foundation of civil society. The relation of force becomes a historical object, and this is integrated into political calculations from a discourse that claims truth as a weapon in battle.

The importance that this discourse assumes lies in what can be reactivated and conjugated: millenary knowledge, the truth of the underprivileged and forbidden and traditional myths, in short, as pointed out by Foucault (2010, p. 49), “[...] a discourse in which truth works as a weapon for a purely partisan victory. It is a darkly critical speech, but it is also an intensely mythical speech; it is one of love, bitterness, but it is also of the wildest hopes”. Speech that will use history as knowledge to decipher the forces and, even more, to modify them. Truth as a political weapon, because the control of historical knowledge will define a strategic position on the battlefield. A speech also identifies the forces of war with the foundations of civil society in deciphering the struggles that pervade institutions and peace.

In this context, arguing that politics is war continued by other means is to assert that power relations are sustained in a force relationship inscribed in war and by war. In this model, political power would have the task of constantly reinserting these power relations in civil society “[...] by a kind of silent war” (Foucault, 2010, p. 15), which exposes and explores the imbalances of forces manifested in battle, either through economic and social inequalities or linguistic, ethnic and racial differences, among many others. Yet it would mean that behind the supposed civil peace would be a permanent political struggle, “[...] confrontations over power, with power, for power” (Foucault, 2010, p. 16). Finally, it would denote a third sense:

The final decision can only come from war, that is, from a test of force in which the weapons must ultimately be the judges. The end of the politician would be the ultimate battle, that is, the ultimate battle would at last suspend, and after all only, the exercise of power as a continuing war.

Far from having the cease of arms, the appeasement of clashes and the peace pact as a condition of possibility, civil society finds war itself as its background, and politics can be understood as a mode of operation intrinsic to the war model, whose mechanism of action lies in the unequal redistribution of forces within the social body, intensifying some, scrapping others.

Foucault will locate this theoretical framework both in the popular and petty bourgeoisie claims in pre-revolutionary and revolutionary England and in the complaints of the French aristocracy, as discussed earlier, both in reaction to the king's control. Speech

whose background is the claim of rights based on the primacy of the race. The war of all against all is, at the limit, the war between different races, one wanting to impose servitude on the other.

Therefore - and this passage from historical-political discourse to the theory of race war interests us very much here – “[...] the war that undermines our society and divides it in a binary way is race war” (Foucault, 2010, p. 51). The historical-political discourse undertakes a rescue of the race war made from the differences of ethnicity, language and force. It is from this theory of race war that legitimacy will be sought for nationalist struggles and European colonization. At this point where the permanent struggle that rips the social body intersects with the struggle of races, one sees the ‘transcription’ of historical-political discourse into biological-political discourse. War goes from the condition of existence of society and political relations to the condition of its own survival in their political relations.

Biopolitics and racism as a State strategy

To show how local knowledge-power - reactivated in the seventeenth century from a struggle against sovereign power, based on detailed research on the origin of peoples, decentralized and partial knowledge-power - goes into a centralized, biological-racist, holder of power and holder of the norm, Foucault (2010) performs another inversion.

The war to be waged will no longer be against an enemy, the barbarian-stranger who has invaded, plundered, seized the kingdom, founded institutions to secure his domain and from which to defend himself, presupposing a binary society, composed by them, invaders, holders of power and violence, and we, expropriated and subjected, who claim the rights prior to the invasion. Defending against society, this is the motto offered by the historical-political discourse.

Invested and colonized by domination techniques more global, the historical-political discourse will be updated in the development of a biological-cultural racism in the nineteenth⁵ century, in which evolutionist theory and the struggle for life will be in question. The war of races is reconfigured in the struggle of race, from plural to singular. Thus, the enemy to be faced will not be beyond the borders of the state, weapon in hand and thirsty for blood and domination. The danger to be fought grows in the silence of life and within society itself, erodes the bowels of the social fabric, metastasizing itself and imposing another organization contrary to the very order of life. It will no longer be the confrontation between two races, but a single super race is erected whose inside out exposes what escapes and threatens it. It is therefore necessary to defend biological heritage, to eliminate this tiny race that multiplies within the social body: “[...] we have to defend society against all the biological threats posed by the other race, this subrace, the counter-race that we are, despite ourselves, bringing into existence” (Foucault, 2010, p. 52). In defense of society, here is the motto of monistic society which is intended to be homogeneous.

⁵Foucault shows how the historical-political discourse, in the successive transformations that it underwent over time, began to be used by the revolutionary discourse, since this way of knowing operated the rescue of the history of the oppressed, put back in the play of words the massacres made by power and sought to bring to light the real war and its horrors. Well, in this sense, the historical-political discourse, operated by the revolutionary discourse, began to transcribe the race struggle into class struggle. Foucault (2010, p. 67) quotes an excerpt from a letter written by Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels in 1882: “But our class struggle, you know where we found it: we found it in French historians when they narrated the race struggle”. A revolutionary counter history. At this moment, Foucault tells us, there is a reaction, a counterhistory of the revolutionary counterhistory that was forming, which will invest the historical-political knowledge in a biological-medical perspective, undermining the historical dimension of this discourse and constituting the hard core of what will later be state racism.

Therefore, the very idea of a nation is changed, which will be thought not from the warrior force, the barbaric intensity required for the defense of the kingdom, but in terms of capabilities, how effective and efficient it is in managing, governing and administer power and the state. Nation and state coincide.

At the expense of a shift from law to norm, from legal to biological; at the expense of a passage that went from the plural of the races to the singular of the race; At the expense of a transformation that made the liberation project a concern for purity, state sovereignty took over, re-considered, and reused the race struggle discourse in its own strategy (Foucault, 2010, p. 68).

The idea of race purity, with everything that includes at the same time monistic, state and biological, will be the one that will replace the idea of race fight. There is only one race whose biological heritage must be protected. The social body must be homogeneous, and all deviations from the natural order that proliferate, metastasize, carry dangers, and threaten the integrity of the social fabric must be eliminated. The state will be on charge of accomplishing this task by “[...] managing a police that ensures the silent hygiene of an orderly society” (Foucault, 2010, p. 70).

Standardization and biopolitics

If, as the French philosopher points out, in the sovereign power the motto was “[...] to die and let live [...]”, in which the death and life of the subjects passed indelibly through the royal power that held the right to life and death from an act of will, in biopolitics, the maxim is inverted: “[...] make live, let die” (Foucault, 2010, p. 202). From this new inversion, Foucault emphasizes as the nodal point of the transition from sovereign power to biopolitics the inscription of the problematic of life within the power over death, or, in other words that the philosopher presents in *A vontade de saber*, was “[...] the entrance of life in history” (Foucault, 2009, p. 154), which became part of the political calculations.

The new political and power techniques in which life will be problematized will be presented by the author on two fronts. The first, from the increasing individualization of bodies and their exposure to visibility in order to extract maximum useful force from them according to strategies of power rationalization. To this power, located in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, based on discipline, organization, hierarchy, allocation of bodies according to spatial determinants and temporal rhythms, Foucault (2009, 2010, 2013) will call disciplinary power.

It is worth remembering that we are, in this historical context, at the height of industrial capitalism in which the demands for manpower and labor force were increasing in the industrialized countries, and its improvement and expansion came from the assumption of the body in economic and power strategies. Bodies whose “[...] constant subjection of their forces [...]” impose on them a “[...] docility-utility relationship [...]”, composing, through the disciplines, “[...] general formulas of domination” (Foucault, 2013, p. 133).

In the second half of the eighteenth century, there will appear another technique of power that will invest the first, however moving on another surface: from the body-man of discipline power to the species-man, made mass, object of other control strategies. It will be in this new form of power, called biopolitics⁶, that historical-biological discourse will be

⁶ In this article, we chose to use the terms biopolitics and biopower as synonyms, since in the lecture of our analysis, *Em defesa da sociedade*, Foucault (2010, p. 204) uses them indistinctly, even when marking the birth of biopower, in contrast to disciplinary power: “[...] what is this new technology of power, this biopolitics, this biopower that is setting in?”. Some Foucault scholars explain the ambiguities and indiscernibilities between biopower and biopolitics, such as Thomas Lemke

integrated into political calculations, and biological processes such as birth rate, mortality rate, longevity will be scrutinized in the name of the safety of the population from the dangers that undermine it from within.

Global and random phenomena will be the new targets of control and purge in the name of equilibrium, population homeostasis in order to impose not a discipline but a regulation based on the statistical norm. Therefore, a society of normalization is created in which the norm imposed on the machine body is conjured with the expected norm of the body of the population.

What interests us here, above all, is the status of life in the transition from sovereign power to biopower, when “[...] the old power of death in which sovereign power symbolized is now carefully overlaid by the administration of bodies and calculating management of life” (Foucault, 2009, p. 152). Power based on the preservation of the species, the elimination of everything that might compromise and erode it from within, in order to expand life in countless possibilities.

In this context, the attentive reader has already noticed a first crossroads: now, how this power that targets the life and preservation of the population can use mechanisms own to the sovereign power and claim for itself the right to die, to make die, as we see in states where the exception of the law works, for certain segments of the population, as a rule, and state terror has its perverse and deadly face?

State racism

The argument used by Foucault (2010) converges war’s biopolitics, racism and rhetoric. The battles to be fought, the struggle to be won are confined to the realms of the social body against the inner danger that threatens the continuation of life through weaknesses, anomalies, monstrosities, degenerations, and all sorts of disorders that break the balance of ‘biological continuum’, exposing the population to risk.

Thus, racism will be the biological-political argument through which operates a “[...] cut between what must live and what must die” (Foucault, 2010, p. 214) in the name of purification and improvement of the social body, which creates a cleavage in the within the population, scrapping some segments in relation to others through continuous social normalization. In the link with the rhetoric of war, racism will operate not only a qualification of races, hierarchizing them, but a relationship in which the elimination of the inferior other presupposes a quantification and qualification of the life of the superior and dominant race, so that racism “[...] provides the ideological foundation for identifying others, isolating them, fighting them, or even murdering them - in the name of making life better” (Lemke, 2018, p. 65).

It will be the seizure of racism by the biopower that determines the actions of the state that are beyond the primary aim of life-assuring biopolitics, to invest in the cruel, and now subtle, mechanisms of revisited sovereignty, killing and killing. Subtle, as Foucault (2010, p. 216) reminds us, taking life is not limited to direct murder, but also “[...] the fact of exposing to death, of multiplying the risk of death for some”.

(2018). Judith Revel (2005) and Edgar de Castro (2016) make a distinction between such concepts, pointing to biopolitics as the taking, by politics, of biological factors concerning a mass of individuals that constitute a population, while biopower would encompass both biopolitics and disciplinary power. In this sense, biopower would be the integration of the political anatomy of the body with the biopolitics of the population.

In this way, biopolitics, as a politics of life that targets the set of biological processes of the population, presupposes to be a “[...] centralized instance that guides and drives it, which oversees its purity and is strong enough to cope with its ‘enemy elements’ within and without” (Lemke, 2018, p. 65). As a result, state rationality invests in racism, is guided by it, and transforms it into state policy. That said, race is the ultimate stronghold to which the state appeals in its project of purifying the social body, and war, far from being a strategic calculation of force in the service of politics, becomes a political objective. Convergence - or rather would it be paroxysm? - of biopolitics with sovereign power whose link is racism.

Problematization

Throughout his work, Foucault incessantly urges us to be attentive to the present. Thus, it is the actuality of our lives that causes a problem to arise, instigate us, and force us to search for an intelligibility template, using the philosopher’s words, for what plagues us. Thinking about the present, in Brazil, especially in the city of Rio de Janeiro, leads us to a question that reverberates and, in us, lives: we live in Rio de Janeiro, a state of exception in which the law operates in different ways producing a cleavage within society that presupposes vulnerability, marginalization, exclusion and even the elimination of certain segments of the population over others of which is necessary to ensure security? Is it appropriate, from a theoretical point of view, to insist on this category? The urgency with which we try to get rid of what plagues us easily puts us in simple answers.

From Foucault, we seek to trace a possible way to reach these thorny issues, because close in time and space. Thus, we share the author’s idea that disciplinary power, together with the normalization society, whose pretext is biological, based on statistics and norm, founds biopower, which reactivates the discourse of war, now invested by racism. The enemy becomes a dangerous agent inscribed within the own state.

What weapons does biopolitics possess in war to be waged against the risks to which the population is exposed? Social hygiene, birth control to combat violence, racist, eugenic politics. These strategies are easily located in the totalitarian states that marked the twentieth century. However, in the twenty-first century, especially on the periphery of capitalism, is it possible to think about the present, the social and political conditions from this theoretical arsenal?

Agamben (2004) points out that the state of exception is not located at a specific historical epoch, but constitutes the very history of modern societies, creating a zone of indeterminacy between democracy and totalitarianism. One of the central features of this process is the appropriation of a measure that would be temporary, emergency - and, it is worth mentioning, who decides on emergence is the state itself - as a lasting technique of government. For the author, “[...] the voluntary creation of a permanent state of emergency (albeit eventually undeclared in the technical sense) has become one of the essential practices of contemporary states, including so-called democratic states” (Agamben, 2004, p. 13).

It is noteworthy that, taking distance from the historical transformations that imply a discontinuity between sovereign power and biopower, as proposed by Foucault (2009, 2010) - discontinuity that does not mean rupture, rather a crossing that reverses the mechanisms of action -, Agamben (2010) makes a bet on the immanent connection between these forms of power, so that biopolitics would constitute the hard core around which the exercise of sovereign power would be articulated (Lemke, 2018). This distinction is important because

from it we argue that, in Rio de Janeiro, biopolitics is inseparable from the exercise of sovereign power and this, in turn, engenders spaces that are outside the legal system and, therefore, separated from the protection of the law. The dramatic consequence of these territories of exclusion is a qualifying split in the materiality of life, the result and residue of which is *homo sacer* as the other face of the sovereign, that is, the systematic and insistent production of 'naked life', or "[...] life that can be killed without committing homicide" (Agamben, 2010, p. 135).

The examples given at the beginning of this text, taken from public statements made by state entities and an editorial decision of the newspaper *Extra*, give the indication that thinking the contemporary with Foucauldian analysis as a theoretical tool, added to the contributions - in this study, punctual - by Giorgio Agamben, not only makes sense but is of the utmost importance.

Death, in the name of citizens' lives (here it is called 'good'), hovers as a rule on the periphery of capitalism and has roots that can be located, in the context of Rio de Janeiro, during the period of the formation of the Republic, in the passage from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Since then, repressive forms of social control have been adopted under the imperative of 'law' and 'order', with the production of stigmas and a strong discriminatory charge against marginalized populations in the then capital of the Republic. Hygienist actions, with echoes and influence of Benedict-Augustin Morel and his *Tratado das degenerescências na espécie humana* (1857/2008), defended on Brazilian soil by Gustavo Riede, founder of the Liga Brasileira de Higiene Mental (LBHM), of clearly eugenic orientation and xenophobic nature, are an example of the historical construction, according to Coimbra (2001), of the 'dangerous classes', against which specific state actions are needed.

In the name of race qualification and the prevention of mental illness, the LBHM preached that both patients sick and addicted to alcohol and other drugs and descendants of African or Oriental origin, as well as many other types of foreign immigrants, could not marry, or should be sterilized so that they would not procreate, among many other restrictive measures of freedom and citizenship (Brasil, 2003, p. 36).

The choice for an urban management centered on repressive forms of social control does not represent, therefore, a rupture of the modernization model that has been engendered since the beginning of the twentieth century. From the administration of Pereira Passos, at the municipal level, to the governments of Sérgio Cabral and Michel Temer, at the state and federal levels, respectively, going through interveners appointed during the civil-military dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985), the popular spaces such as slums and peripheries are historically represented as enemy territories. This one that must be fought is what will legitimize force solutions, such as the removal process, the sanitation of the public space, the installation of the Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora (UPPs) and, more recently, the decree 9288 of military intervention in the public security of the State of Rio de Janeiro. In many communities, the state of exceptionality is not perceived as an exclusive attribute of dictatorial regimes. The meaning is of daily, continuous oppression, even in democratic periods.

If Agamben (2010) warns us of the importance of recognizing the field - in this case, the concentration camp in an analogy to the current wide and diversified segregation processes - through all its metamorphoses, we can see the coexistence of two states in the Western metropolises: one, formal legal for rights holders and included in the consumer market; and another, militarized and generating a type of purifying violence against the

unwanted other, represented by the “[...] needy and excluded bodies” (Agamben, 2010, p. 173). The deaths resulting in these territories from the so-called resistance records⁷, tributary to techniques and procedures dating from the military period, materialize the idea of ‘naked life’ mentioned by Agamben (2010). In this way, a qualitative cutoff operates between “[...] the life worth living [...]” and “[...] the life that does not deserve to be lived” (Agamben, 2010, p. 133) exposing a fracture in the social body whose suture seems impossible.

Therefore, everything comes as if what we call the people were, in reality, not a unitary subject, but a dialectical oscillation between two opposite poles: on the one hand, the People as an integral political body, on the other, the people subset as a fragmentary multiplicity of needy and excluded bodies; there, an inclusion that is intended without noise, here, an exclusion that is known without hope; at one extreme, the total state of the integrated and sovereign citizens, at the other, the scum [...] of the wretched, the oppressed, the defeated. A single and compact referent of the term ‘people’ does not exist anywhere in this sense (Agamben, 2010, p. 173, author’s emphasis).

In an argument launched in the book *Indignos de vida*, Civil Police Chief of the State of Rio de Janeiro Orlando Zaccone (2015, p. 23) argues that “[...] there is a public policy, in the form of state reasons, to give rise to the high lethality rates of the Brazilian penal system, especially those routinely practiced in the Rio de Janeiro slums by the hands of the military police”. However, Zaccone points out: “[...] the police kill but do not kill alone” (2015, p. 23).

It should be noted that the lethal action of the state has been legitimized by broad segments of civil society, such as commercial media, which has been constituted in strategic support without which warlike solutions would not be sustained in the long run. In this sense, the narratives of slum stigmatization⁸ and the coverage guided by the production of fear in which it is reinforced the dominant thinking about the need for more repressive forms of social control.

More symptomatic of this conjuncture, however, is the popular vote for a biologically-racist political platform centered on the promise of ‘slaughter of criminals’ with legal backing for the policeman to “[...] aim at the head and [...] fire”⁹ (Witzel, 2018). The sense of security of the ‘good citizen’, as defined by a portion of the Brazilian population that supports with votes and applause the resurgence of public security actions, the militarization of daily life and the ‘slaughter of criminals’, is full of fear and blood, and engenders the production of a security subjectivity in which the demands for security appear as imperative. In this sense, the relationship with the other becomes mere social artifact since, in the order of desire, this other appears as a pure threat. The construction of the self no longer presupposes the other as a constituent, with its differences and demands, but, on the contrary, entails as a condition

⁷ Legal mechanism, provided for in the Penal Code, which authorizes public officials to use the necessary means to act against persons who resist arrest in the act or determined by court order. Article 284 provides that “the use of force shall not be permitted, except that which is indispensable in the event of resistance or attempted escape from the prisoner”. Human rights movements denounce that the resistance records, created during the period of the civil-military dictatorship, have served to cover up summary executions of police officers against young black slum dwellers.

⁸ During a protest in front of the Assembleia Legislativa de Rio de Janeiro (Alerj) on June 17, 2013, the statement of the then ‘security commentator’ of Grupo Globo, Rodrigo Pimentel, former police officer of the Batalhão de Operações Especiais (Bope), illustrates this reasoning. Criticizing the use of rifles by police to disperse protesters, Pimentel pointed out that “[...] it is a weapon of war, a weapon of police operation in communities and slums; it is not a weapon for use in an urban environment”. In this reasoning, slums are territories of war, so they are not part of the urban area, and abuse, truculence and arbitrariness are tolerable.

⁹ Actions defended in an interview by the elected governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Wilson Witzel, of the Partido Social Cristão (PSC) in the 2018 election, which presents as a strategy for this purpose the use of snipers and drones capable of shooting remotely.

of possibility the elimination of the other that carries as its index a threatening danger. Above all, it threatens its domination.

Final considerations

The public security policy of the state of Rio de Janeiro has long diagnosed the disease that the social body needs to get rid of: the enemy that carries violence. The defense of society involves the identification of this internal enemy, the 'dangerous classes' that can be found in the city's slums and ghettos, and the strategies to get rid of this 'metastasis', a metaphor used by former President Temer, are as varied as possible: from the legalization of abortion as a public policy to reduce violence, as defended by the then governor Sergio Cabral, thus avoiding the emergence of a mass of unwanted children, until the resurgence of security actions against crime, in which the elimination of another intolerable seems to be *modus operandi* of the state, whose mission is strictly fulfilled by the Polícia Militar of Rio de Janeiro (PMERJ).

From the above, we have been examined a political game in which state violence is assumed as a strategic weapon in the fight against the internal enemy that invades and conflagrates the social body. Biopolitics, which aims to ensure the well-being and health of the population, intersects with a power of another order, the 'tanatopolitics'¹⁰ (Agamben, 2010), which uses the monopoly of violence against a very specific portion of the population, producing countless deaths in the name of life.

The justification that sustains, sews and permeates all these actions in the name of the state, in defense of society, has already been drawn by the newspaper *Extra* and the former president's speech: we are at war.

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¹⁰ A second important distinction between Foucault and Agamben is necessary: if the French philosopher sees in biopolitics, as in all forms of power, a productive dimension, "power produces", in Agamben biopolitics is always transcribed into a power of death, so that biopolitics will be "above all, tanatopolitics" (Lemke, 2018, p. 87), and therefore a resource, or in any case, an effect of sovereignty. In his critique of Agamben's reading of biopolitics, Thomas Lemke points out that the author was more interested in the nakedness of life than in life itself. Regarding the conceptual differences of biopolitics between Foucault and Agamben cf. Lemke (2018) and Duarte (2013).

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