Foucault and Beyond: From Sovereignty Power to Contemporary Biopolitics

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Abstract

In this paper, I will provide an interpretation of Foucauldian theoretical understanding on natures of power from sovereign power to biopolitics. In order to give further depth and texture to what he means by biopolitics, I will attempt to connect biopolitics with his earlier work *Discipline and Punish*. The term 'biopolitics' was actually mentioned by Foucault on the last chapter of his *History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, where he also claimed it as a technology of power linked to biopower. Foucault wrote that the highest function of biopolitics is not to kill, but to invest life through and through in the machineries of production. If that is the case, then, biopolitics aims to ensure the longevity, health, and wellness of the social bodies. However, if biopolitics is the politics that safeguard life, how come that the innumerable individuals are situated in dire condition? To answer this question, the work of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt will be used to understand further the nature of biopolitics and its effects in the social terrain specially in the contemporary society.

Keywords: discipline, sovereign power, biopolitics, biopower. Foucault

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1970s, Michel Foucault published his book titled, *Discipline and Punish* with the subtitle, '*Birth of Prison*'[1]. In this

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1   See, GyanPrakash,"Body Politic," *Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 17, No. 30* (July., 24, 1982): 1194. For Prakash, the subtitle *'Birth of Prison'* serves as'' metaphor for societies based on punitive and disciplinary techniques aimed at securing physical, although not necessarily violent, control over human bodies''.

text, Foucault details historically and genealogically the shift from monarchical penalty to the appearance of the modern prison, entailing profound changes in the way populations are policed and administered. Foucault here tells us that society has to make way for more precise, economical, and productive instruments of regulation to administer the population and facilitate industrialization. Under such circumstance, life becomes the object of politics but at the same time its subject. [2] This marks the emergence of new technology of power known as biopolitics. In Foucaultian interpretation:

> Biopolitics implies regularization of population according to the perceived insistence of norms . . . Unlike the diffuse, microscopic, governmental mechanisms of surveillance that identify the need for disciplinary interventions, biopolitics concern itself with the regularization of societies in a large scale, notably through demography.[3]

By studying, measuring, examining, and analyzing the "biological features" or "nature" of collective social bodies (i.e. rates of morbidity and natality, etc.) we could establish norms and regulations to effectively govern and optimize the lives of the population. For Foucault, biopolitics is a technology of power that administers life. And since biopolitics is the combination of the terms *bios* (life) and politics, we immediately apprehend that the study oscillates around the attempt to develop instead of destroy life. D

Despite the positive view, we bear witness to many despicable phenomena – war, racism, famine, scarcity, ethnic cleansing, and ecological problems – that highlight the contemporary problems of bio-politicking.

In this paper, I will offer an interpretation of Foucauldian theoretical understanding on natures of power from sovereign power to biopolitics. Let me begin the discussion by delineating the shift of power from monarchical power to disciplinary power. This is relevant

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2   Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Advance Introduction*, trans. Erick Frederick (New York and London: New York University, 2011), 9-10.

3   Michael Griffiths, *Biopolitical Correspondence: Settler Nationalism, Thanatopolitics, and the Perils of Hybridity* (Australia: Australian Literary Studies), 20.

to understand the reasons behind the transition from single locus of power to a decentralized form of power. Also, to know that limitations of the sovereign power and discipline power to administer the population which gave rise to biopolitics. Foucault viewed biopolitics as a technology of power linked to biopower.[4]

In Foucault's theoretical work these three terms: discipline, biopolitics, and biopower, are particularly important to understanding the social structures, social relations, social discourses, and power-knowledge relationship. If we take these seriously, we must recognize that Foucault's works contain relevant insights that would inevitably lead to better understanding of the present. So, after which, I will attempt to connect this important concept with Antonio Negri's ad Michael Hardt's *Empire* to understand how biopolitics plays itself out in contemporary world.

From the Classical Sovereign to Disciplinary Society

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes the transition from the sovereign disposal to the modern administration of power: a shift from a single and highly visible operating power to a less visible but more efficient control and regulation. Foucault succeeds in delineating properly the distinct nature of sovereign power and modern power: the latter, Foucault points out, works surreptitiously to "incite, reinforce, control, optimize, and organize the forces under it," while the former uses the monarch's capacity to "take life and let live."[5]

In Foucaultian narration, the king, during the classical sovereign period, has the privilege to inflict death to his offenders under the premise of "right to take life and let live."[6] Foucault has claimed that the right to decide over life and death originates from the ancient *patria protesta* where the father of a Roman family had the right to 'dispose' of the life of his children and slaves; just as he had given them life, so he

4   Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics:Lectures at the College de France,* translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 5.

5   Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality:An Introduction Volume One*, translated by Robert Hurley (New York: Hurley Pantheon Books, 1987), 136.

6   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, translated by David Mackey (New York: Picador, 1977) 242.

could take it away.[7] This is based on the notion that the offender offends not only the state but the king as well.   .

> What does the right of life and death actually mean? The right of life and death is always exercised in an unbalanced way: the balance is always tipped in favor of death. Sovereign power's effect on life is exercised only when the sovereign power can kill. The very essence of the right of life and death is actually the right to kill: it is at the moment when the sovereign can kill that he exercises his right over life . . . It is not the right to put people to death or to grant them life. Nor it is the right to allow people to live or to let them die. It is the right to take life or let live. . . right of the sword.[8]

Foucault argues that the sovereign's strength and power over his subjects was accentuated in his power to intervene in public execution where he could decide whether to kill or let his offenders live. This sovereign power boils down to the capacity to dispense with life. The eighteenth-century reformers reckoned that such execution was an uneconomical, haphazard, and careless dispensation of penalty. With the rise of capitalism, the reformers perceived that it was no longer "economical" to treat bodies in this manner. In this epoch the social bodies must be utilized efficiently for the social production. Yet they were witnessing the ineffectiveness and limitations of the sovereign power to support the need of the population growth and impending development of industry became evident. People began to revolt against the system: the practice of confession of the crime (the utterance of truths in the execution) that was supposed to justify the violence of the sovereign and the law turned against itself (the confession of the criminals had stirred the emotions of the audience and had caused disruption like the masses turned to protect the criminal); the bunch of criminals were using the site of theatrical performances to plot their indecent project, that is, to steal. The public spectacle developed a crowd of "dangerous individuals"[9].

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7   Foucault, *History of Sexuality* , 135.

8   Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, 240. See also Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 136.

9   Foucault expounds: "[T]oday the crime tends to be no more than the event that signals the existence of dangerous element - that is, more or less dangerous - in the social body." Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1985*, 179. s

So, to mitigate the problem and to avoid the emergence of a disordered state, the reformists marched against the repressive power of the sovereign using "humanitarian" ideologies. [10] They proposed the "de-centralization" of power (I used the term decentralization to signify the power that is diffused and operating everywhere), for it was no longer advisable for a single locus of power to control the population phenomena (e.g, morbidity and natality rates) and the new mode of production (e.g., the rise of capitalism). They demanded for a new economy of power, for a power with "minimum expenditure" and "maximum efficiency" to replace the juridical sovereign. The de-centralized structure of power has been used even today.

Foucault discovered that this phenomenon, namely, the reconfiguration and decentralization of power relations, gave rise, not exactly to a more lenient, but perhaps to a more subtle but more calculative punitive mechanism, typified by the "prison" which targeted the "soul," a soul that ultimately kept the body in thrall, enabling it to function in a more productive way. It gave birth to a disciplinary regime. [11] It appears to me that the objective of discipline is not to destroy the body, but to make a tool for continuous production: the shift from public execution to incarceration (prison, as a technique of power, has been the model used by the workplace, school, barracks, and psychiatrists) is designed to render the bodies useful and utilizable for the endless circuit of production. Note that discipline has become a particular network of power aimed at scientifically accumulating and scrutinizing even the micro-details of the body.[12] As such it enables institutions to handle bodies by means of a series of hierarchizations, normalization, examinations, and perpetual surveillance.[13] All information received from these diverse disciplinary machineries is used to correct, modify, train, and transform the individual bodies to ensure their docility, profitability, and utility.

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10   See: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish, 16, 82.*

11   See: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish.*

12   Foucault permits us to think that the body is considered as the locus/site of knowledge.

13   For Foucault, "there must be confession, self-examination, explanation to oneself, revelation of one's self." Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1985*, 177.

However, the disciplinary techne of power is inadequate in resolving the problem of population. Consequently, a new mechanism of power must be invented to regulate the population phenomenon.[14]

The Birth of Regulatory Mechanisms

The growth of population has influenced the structure of power-relations in the society.[15] According to Foucault, it was only during the eighteenth century when the "population" became the object of politics. Foucault explains in his 1970s lectures that the population became the object of politics, science, and medicine[16]. Such move was propelled by the increasing knowledge that the state of existence of living bodies would definitely affect the economic and political terrains.

As the population continues to increase, the demand for vigorous and strict measures concerning population (sex and sexuality) has been raised by modern institutions to diminish the possible damages that it may inflict upon the society. For if the population would continue to expand exponentially, the limited spaces and resources will not be sufficient to support their needs. On the other hand, if, under extreme conditions, the number of people will decline dramatically, our kind is at stake. These imagined possibilities call for rigorous measures and

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14   Bruce Curtis contends that " the concept of population is central to the creation of new orders of knowledge, new objects of interventions, new forms of subjectivities, and new state forms." Furthermore, he argues, "population" is composed of many 'undifferentiated atoms," which are subject of statistical analysis and objects of intervention, such as, marriage, birth, and death controls. In his analysis of Foucauldian 'governmentality,' he contends, population is thought scientifically and politically. It is involved in individualization and totalization of social bodies. See: Bruce Curtis,"Foucault on Governmentality and Population: The Impossible Discovery," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 27, No. 4 (Autumn, 2002), pp. 505-533.

15   In the middle of the eighteenth century, power urges people to ensure their physical health for   economic and political purposiveness; the unhealthy social bodies will eventually affect the economic landscape and will counter the productivity of state. At this point, it is not surprising the political space brings biopolitics into discourse- attempting to reactivate the concept of valued life.

16   It was also the period when people began to take interest in the health of population. See Foucault, *The Birth of Medicine,* in Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1985*, 39.

security down to the level of human life to resolve any possible chronic crises (such as hunger, disease, and repression) that may threaten the societal development.

At this point, a new mechanism, strategy, and technology of power that will deal with the regularization of biological processes of the population is hereby demanded to resolve the aforementioned crises posed to the humankind, a form of power that will be in charge of controlling the size of the population and will warrant the optimum existence of the people. It is implicit in the Foucauldian works that population control is possible only if the mechanisms of power will operate so as to gather the clear demographic characterizations of the population (life expectancy, health, mortality, and natality rates). The information obtained from demographers, some might say, will help resolve and expunge the present and other possible problems concerning population. And the power responsible for this is known as biopolitics.[17]

> This technology of power does not exclude the former (discipline), 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.[18]

On Biopower and Biopolitics

Foucauldian analysis shows that more biopolitical procedures were brought to bear on the human race during the second half of

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17   According to Rasmussen, "Foucault first employs the term 'biopolitics' in October 1974 during a conference paper delivered in Rio de Janeiro." He further adds, "Foucault, to put it schematically, employs the notion of biopolitics in three distinct configurations. First, biopolitics establishes a conceptual and analytical link between social medicine as a specific knowledge formation and the emergence of capitalist society in late 18th- and early 19th-century Europe. Second, Foucault employs the notion of biopolitics to describe the politicization of the life of a population. The notion of biopolitics is evoked in conjunction with racism and sexuality as a technology of power distinct from both sovereignty and discipline. Finally, the study of governmentality, in particular neo-liberal governmentality, circumscribes and reframes the analysis of biopolitics." Kim Su Rasmussen, "Foucault's Genealogy of Racism," *Sage: Theory, Culture, and Society* (SAGE, Los Angeles, 2011), Vol. 28 : 38.

18   Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, 242.

eighteenth century. This epoch witnessed the further expansion of capitalism, the opening of nation-states to free-market, the spread of chronic diseases (endemics and epidemics), and population phenomena. The modern institutions began to view life as an important object that needed to be analyzed and regulated. This new technology of power, biopolitics, took charge of the biological processes of human species, such as its "transformations," "processes," and "developments"; these were manifested by implementing natalist policies, which included measures on morbidity rate and longevity of life. Analogous to the micro-level investigation of individual body mechanisms, institutions now sought to study populations at the macro-level, on the level of the collective social bodies: it will now address man not simply as a body but as man-as-specie.[19] As Foucault writes:

> what we are we dealing with. . . is a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while it might be infinite in number, cannot necessarily be counted. Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem.[20] The discovery of population therefore brings forth new power-relations to make sure that the social bodies become susceptible to regulation. In this epoch the state mobilizes many actors (doctors, police, family, engineers, philanthropists, architects, etc., engaged in bio-politics) to administer the multitude of social bodies. It is implicit in Foucault's work that to make population management possible multifarious networks of power are penetrating and intervening in the collective's behavior, life, and existence.

Foucault's understanding of biopolitics is inseparable from the idea of sex and sexuality.[21] He argues:

> [O]ne had to speak of it (sex and sexuality) as of a thing to be not simply condemned or tolerated but managed, inserted into systems of utility, regulated for the greater good of all, made to

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19   See: *Ibid.*, 243.

20   *Ibid.*, 245.

21   Foucault claims, "sexuality represent a precise point where the disciplinary and the regulatory, the body and the population are articulated." See: Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, 252 . Also, Foucault, *History of Sexuality,* 25-26.

function according to optimum. Sex was not something to simply judge; it was a thing one administered (subject to police).[22]

The "hysterization of women's bodies," "pedagogization of children's sex," "socialization of procreative behavior" and "psychiatrization of perverse pleasures," should be understood as regulatory mechanisms that are intended to produce a positive effect on the population. By regulating the sexual conduct of the people we may be able to avoid the spread of diseases (i.e., sexually transmittable diseases and the degeneracy of population) and the increase of population. One of the ways to manage the population, therefore, is through the implementation of policies and norms regarding sex and sexuality; its health, hygiene, and fertility. Indeed, it unleashes the significant transformation of politics from public spectacle to administration of life.

However, the problem of biopolitics rests on the idea that "although less people have died on the scaffold," the world is witnessing deaths that are "bloodier than ever." We have nothing but dismay over the heartrending ethnic and racial discrimination and extermination which persist in this epoch; genocides are prevalent. Surprisingly, these mass killings are grounded on the same task of protecting and administering life.

> Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes has been able to wage so man wars causing so many men to be killed . . . The principle underlying the tactics of battle-that one has capable of killing in order to go on living-has become the principle that defines the strategy of the state.[23]

It is indeed perplexing how in the age of modernity, the age of reason, where supposedly the "biological existence [of man] was reflected [and mastered] in political existence,"[24] we are awaken by the

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22 Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 24.

23 *Ibid*., 137.

24 *Ibid*., 142.

horror of murderous annihilations of lives, exemplified by, along with many others, Nazism. This underscored the idea that the managerial technologies of power have tendencies to either expose life to violence or negate life itself. In spite of the undeterred exposure to violence of life, Foucault still writes that these technologies of power are characterized by "a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through.[25]

> Such power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendor; it does not have to draw the line that separates the enemies of the sovereign from his obedient subjects; it effects distribution around the norms. [26]

At this point, it is significant to pinpoint the power that undermines the sovereign right to take life and let live, which is called biopower, the power to foster or disallow life to the point of death.[27] To further illumine, Foucault writes:

> I wouldn't say exactly that the sovereignty's old right- to take life and let live- was replaced but it came to be complemented by a new right which does not erase the old right but which penetrate it, permeate it. This is the right, or rather precisely the opposite right. It is the power to "make" live and "let" die. The right of sovereignty was the right to take life or let live. And then this new right is established as the right to make live and to let die. [28]

The biopower wields such an enormous amount of power that it can destroy or create life. Take note that biopower takes two forms:

i.   the body-organism-discipline-institutions series,

ii. and the population-biological processes-regulatory mechanisms-state. [29]

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25 *Ibid*., 139.

26 *Ibid*.

27 *Ibid*., 136.

28 Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 241.

29 *Ibid*., 250.

The disciplinary technologies - ranging from home to schools, workshops, barracks - collect and calculate the mechanisms information of the body in order to render them docile and increase their economic and political utility, while the biopolitics, on the other hand, make of statistical records measure longevity and ensure sanitation, reproduction, health care, and education to assure the availability of the labor force and their obedience.[30]

> Both technologies are obviously technologies of the body, but one is a technology in which the body is individualized, while the other is a technology in which bodies are replaced by general biological processes. [31]

Through the help of these technologies, biopower works efficaciously in "optimizing," "regulating," "controlling," "administering," and "inciting" the populations. Through discipline and regulatory technologies, biopower has the power to normalize society: it is through normalization of society that power takes control of both the body and life of the human species.[32] Power as such, when used in a totalizing fashion, as in Nazism, makes inevitable the gruesome production of death. As Foucault noted:

> ... excess of biopower appears when it becomes technologically and politically possible for man not only to manage life but to make it proliferate, to create living matter, to build the monster, and ultimately, to build viruses that cannot be controlled and that are universally destructive. [33]

That power, therefore, which aims to guarantee, protect, secure, and develop life, did not cease to produce death. Today, biopolitics and biopower are repackaged, so instead of appearing to be totally impeding and destroying life, they appear to work as if to optimize it. In the present, the population phenomena turn out to be a global concern. We are now seeing multifarious agencies working to administer the health, the property, and the movement of the population.

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30 Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 139.

31 Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, 249.

32 *Ibid.,* 253.

33 *Ibid*.

A number of later scholars have taken this point further, Hardt and Antonio Negri, for example, provide further insights about ways on how to manage the global population.[34] Similar to Foucault, Hardt and Negri believe that there are technologies of power over life. There are various governmental and non-governmental bodies that control, monitor, and govern the world's population. Like, Foucault they see that a single operating power is inadequate to police and administer the social bodies.

Contemporary Bio-Politicking

Today, we see the decline of the nation-state's prerogatives. It takes shape through the signing of political-economic-diplomatic agreements (e.g. World's Order drafted by UN), authorizing the members of the organization to intervene in the economic-political policies of a state, hopefully without infringing on the people's rights.[35] By signing such contracts nation states lose their full authority to implement the biopolitical policies for the nurture of their own people. Consider that they have legitimatized the intervention of other external bodies (trans-and-multinational bodies, financial monetary organisms, etc.,), thinking that the global imperatives and decisions of these supra-national organisms will help them resolve the problems of their own population. This makes it impossible for a nation state to simply decide on its own. The president of the Philippines for example, has no absolute power to govern its people. He/she allows other governmentalizing and non-governmental bodies to reinforce, police, administer and optimize the population.

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34 See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

35 In this age of irreversible globalization, extreme protectionist state policy is rendered incapable of resolving the crisis of population. In recent years, we heard that North Korea is experiencing societal crises such as famine, contagions of diseases, malnutrition, and environmental disruption due to its hostile behaviour towards international and world's organizations. This prompts us to conclude that it is hypocritical to think of unlimited progress without cutting off the head of the state or putting an end to sovereign absolutism. Ergo, the engagement of one nation with the new global rationality is an indispensable decision to be made by a state to protect itself and its people, anchoring the decision on the politics of life.

It is significant to note here that the decline of the sovereignty of nation-states is due to its inability to control the movements of capital (monies, technologies, information, services, goods, and people) within and outside its parameter. The phenomenon of globalization calls for a new framework or arrangement of power: the inadequacy of the state has demanded and permitted the intervention of other forces like IMF, WB, UN, NGOs, UN and media to guarantee the unimpeded productions and exchanges of capital and labor. This undertaking has been questioned by many who saw that this movement would only endanger the humanity by giving the transnational-capitalist corporation and trade agencies an enormous power to control the population, world market, and global scenarios. Many demanded the return of the traditional framework of protection/power that lies at the hand of the sovereign nation-state. Without doubt the intention is for the betterment of the people, but for thinkers like Polanyi, Hardt and Negri the demand would only worsen the condition. Polanyi has taught us that without the aid of foreign organisms a nation-state will not be able to satisfy the need of its people and will only exhaust its own resources to death.[36] At this point, many purport to have recognized the significance of the transition from the nation-state's absolutism, to internationalism, and to globalism. We should understand that the sovereign nation's absolute hold over its citizens and territory has been undermined by this "new sovereignty". This doesn't mean, however, that the sovereignty of nation-states has absolutely declined for they still possess a liminal prerogative to rule. They regulate their own population based on the demand of the new planetary system.

Hardt and Negri name this new sovereignty, Empire. It is "composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under the same logic of rules,"[37] such that "no nation will be the world leader in the way modern European nations were."[38] Unlike the imperial rule of the modern period, which exhibits territorialisation

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36 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time (*Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 3. Quoted in Rolando Munck, *Globalisation and Labour*: *The New 'Great Transformation'* (London& New York: Zed Books, 2002), 2.

37 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Empire.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), xii.

38 *Ibid*., xiii-xiv.

and centralization of power (the obvious extension of power/hegemony of European nations like France and Germany to other subordinated nation-states), Empire is "decentered and deterritorializing the apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open and expanding frontiers,"[39] in the process regulating also the "hybrid identities," "flexible hierarchies," "cultural exchanges," "global economic transactions," and "financial monetary." The Empire's primal objectives are: (1) to resolve the global crisis - famine, war, political disputes, disorder and several others; and (2) to govern the social life in its entirety through the networks of power and/ hybrid constitutions. The latter implies the acting together and/ overlapping of three conflicting forms of governance - monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy - which have their origin in the past.

> For Polybius, the Roman Empire represented the pinnacle of political development because it brought together the three "good" forms of power - monarchy, democracy, and democracy, embodied in the person of the Emperor, the Senate, and the popular comitia. The Empire prevented these good forms from descending into the vicious cycle of corruption in which monarchy becomes tyranny, aristocracy becomes oligarchy, and democracy becomes ochlocracy or anarchy.[40]

However, despite our efforts to eliminate the sources of human suffering, it is undeniable that while securing one's life, other lives are put into horrendous shape. Even Hardt and Negri could not deny this: the need for human security puts the social space in a permanent state of police intervention and surveillance that disable others from living comfortably.

If we flip and scan the pages of our history it will become clear that the biopolitical programs initiated by the world's organizations to resolve the problem of population (ie. access to health care, educational, housing, sanitation) have been inefficient. Many nation-states, for instance, Greece, Venezuela, Philippines, Africa, and so on, are impoverished because of the disciplinary and regulatory mechanisms they are subjected to (e.g. the forced compliance to pay debts). The

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39 *Ibid.*, Xii-xiii.

40 *Ibid.*, 314.

economic crises of these nations are putting their peoples in an unhealthy and terrifying state of life: deprived of medical and educational access. Here, we could argue that social transformation construed in *Empire*: the transition from the imperialism of nation-state (centralized power) to Empire (decentralized power), from sovereignty right of nation-state to the imperial right, "does not signify that "atrocities" cease to exist. As Hardt and Negri recognize, *Empire* wields enormous power of oppression and destruction."

The negative aspects of Empire were strengthened by the fact that in order to secure the global order and peace on today's global society, *bellum justum*, just war, police deployments and moral interventions have been justified. The act of repressing nations or groups (branded as Enemy) who do not conform to the "global imperatives" even to the point of making the lives of those nations or groups counter-productive is still justifiable so long it is pursued under the name of the global order and peace. Yet although the practice of Empire is continually "bathed in blood," Hardt and Negri remind us that "the concept of Empire is always dedicated to peace".

The point is: the new sovereignty did not eliminate the existence of capitalists' exploitation (debt service and economic injustices among nations and people) and biopolitical's exploitations (ethnic rapes, mass genocide, racism and so on.). Despite that we have to believe that the present is better than the past because the movement of people, technologies, goods and services across the borders now help us develop our capacity to deconstruct the hegemonic and appalling order. What is interesting in their work is the view that we can always construct an alternative world. To illumine my point, in the act of migration, for instance, the individual carries within oneself, one's culture, language, ideas, and beliefs. One carries them everywhere one goes and whatever one does, making the information regarding oneself available to the public. This led to the production of "immaterial labor."[41] At the

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41   Hardt and Negri assert that there are two kinds of immaterial labour: one is "primarily intellectual or linguistic, such as problem solving, symbolic and analytical tasks, and linguistic expressions." The other is affective, involving both body and mind, "labor that produces or manipulates affects such as a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement or passion. See Hardt and Negri, *Multitude: : War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004)*, 290.*

present, we are dealing with production not only of material labor, but also of immaterial labor.

> Production today has to be conceived not merely in economic terms, but more generally as a social production - not only the production of material goods, but also the production of communications, relationships, and forms of life.[42]

The production of immaterial things (affects, language, information) creates an avenue for the world's population to organize themselves for the same political project, that is, to destroy all the appalling forces that serve as impediment to the improvement of life. In this context, Hardt and Negri remarkably draw a positive tonality of the biopolitics coming from the Multitude. It is significant to note that the Multitude is composed of innumerable individuals, yet for Hardt and Negri the multitude is not a crowd.

> The multitude is composed of innumerable internal differences that can never be reduced to a unity or a single identity-difference cultures, races, ethnicities, genders and sexual orientation; different forms of labor; different ways of living; different views of the world; and different desires. . . . The multitude is many. Thus the challenge posed by the concept of multitude is for a social multiplicity to manage to communicate and act in common while remaining internally different.[43]

Our differences are irreducible to a single identity indeed, but it does mean we are incapable of conducting a "common" struggle against the destructive practices and forces that surround the social space. The multitude can act and collaborate together their ideas, hopes, desires, wills, and experiences through technologies like the internet (social media) that could annihilate all borders and create a collaborative or common agenda that is to establish a political organization that will secure the naked interest of all and promote social-ecological equilibrium: a political organization composed of multitudes that would exterminate all divisions, hierarchies, and injustices perpetuated in our society.
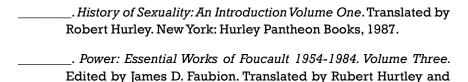
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42   *Ibid.,* xiv.

43   *Ibid*., xiv

CONCLUSION

Foucault's analysis of biopolitics tells us that technologies of power should not be perceived as a mere catastrophic power over life. Hardt and Negri also understand biopolitics as something positive and productive rather than as something negative and destructive. For Hardt and Negri, the biopolitical production from below, from the multitudes, can resist the lethal machineries of the Empire. I believe that we should acknowledge not only the productivity of biopolitics, but also the austerities it that may produce. Contrary to affirmative biopolitics, I apprehend that the immense power of biopolitics to administer the population can produce a negative result. The surplus of biopolitics is seen when it turns to be a device/power that destroy lives or puts them into innumerable forms of sufferings, injustices, and exploitations like deprivation of rights , economic repression and violence; while its productivity can be conceived based on how it develops, maintains, and secures lives. In other words, the biopolitics, which aims to administer life, is not simply a productive mechanism that enhances human lives, but also a mechanism (since it is prone to abuse and injustices) capable of producing harmful and negative effects in the society.

Today, we have to examine seriously the political stances of the market system and create a technology of power that will restore and rethink the value of life in order to eliminate, if not then to lessen, the production of violence in social terrain. Our project is to reinforce the affirmative thought of bio-politics, which is possible only if we understand the world that we are living in including the interplay of power-knowledge in our society and the tools used to manage the world we are living in.

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