

Foucault and Governmentality: International Organizations and State Power

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Abstract : Using the theoretical analysis of the birth of biopolitics that Foucault performed through the history of liberalism and neoliberalism, in this paper we will try to show how, precisely through problematizing the role of international institutions, the model of governance differs from previous ways of objectifying body and life. Are the state and its mechanisms still a Leviathan to fight against, or can it be even the driver of resistance against the proponents of modern governance and the biopolitical power? Do paradigmatic examples of biopolitics still appear through sovereignty and (international) law, or is it precisely this sphere that shows a significant dose of incompetence and powerlessness in relation to, not only the economic sphere (Foucault's critique of neoliberalism) but also the new politics of freedom? Have the struggle for freedom and human rights, as well as the war on terrorism, opened a new spectrum of biopolitical processes, which are manifested precisely through new international institutions and humanitarian discourse? We will try to answer these questions, in the following way. On the one hand, we will show that the views of authors such as Agamben and Hardt and Negri, in whom the state and sovereignty are seen as enemies to be defeated or overcome, fail to see how such attempts could translate into the politicization of life like it is done in many examples through the doctrine of liberal interventionism and humanitarianism. On the other hand, we will point out that it is precisely the humanitarian discourse and the defense of the right to intervention that can be the incentive and basis for the politicization of the category of life and lead to the selective application of human rights. Zizek example of the killing of United Nations workers and doctors in a village during the Vietnam War, who were targeted even before police or soldiers, because they were precisely seen as a powerful instrument of American imperialism (as they were sincerely trying to help the population), will be focus of this part of the analysis. We'll ask the question whether such interpretation is a kind of liquidation of the extreme left of the political (Laclau) or on this basis can be explained at least in part the need to review the functioning of international organizations, ranging from those dealing with humanitarian aid (and humanitarian military interventions) to those dealing with protection and the security of the population, primarily from growing terrorism. Based on the above examples, we will also explain how the discourse of terrorism itself plays a dual role: it can appear as a tool of liberal biopolitics, although, more superficially, it mostly appears as an enemy that wants to destroy the liberal system and its values. This brings us to the basic problem that this paper will tackle: do the mechanisms of institutional struggle for human rights and freedoms, which is often seen as opposed to the security mechanisms of the state, serve the governance of citizens in such a way that the latter themselves participate in producing biopolitical governmental practices? Is the freedom today "nothing but the correlative development of apparatuses of security" (Foucault)? Or, we can continue this line of Foucault's argumentation and enhance the interpretation with the important question of what precisely today reflects the change in the rationality of governance in which society is transformed from a passive object into a subject of its own production. Finally, in order to understand the skills of biopolitical governance in modern civil society, it is necessary to pay attention to the status of international organizations, which seem to have become a significant place for the implementation of global governance. In this sense, the power of sovereignty can turn out to be an insufficiently strong power of security policy, which can go hand in hand with freedom policies, through neoliberal governmental techniques.

Keywords : neoliberalism, Foucault, sovereignty, biopolitics, international organizations, NGOs, Agamben, Hardt&Negri, Zizek, security, state power

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