BIOPOLITICS OF HUNGER
UNDERSTANDING CONTEMPORARY WORLD HUNGER
THROUGH THE CONCEPTS OF
MICHEL FOUCAULT AND GIORGIO AGAMBEN

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Abstract

In this thesis I compare and contrast the biopolitics-concepts of Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben with particular emphasis on the aspect whether they can be employed for analyzing contemporary world hunger. I argue that current theoretical approaches which aim to integrate the two concepts tend to overlook the different role they attribute to sovereign power; a difference, which in my view renders them incompatible. I argue that it is wrong to apply Agamben's thesis about the state of exception becoming normal in our age in the context of contemporary humanitarianism, because these operations do not rely on the sovereign right to take life, but on the biopolitical power to make live.

Therefore, I argue that instead of Agamben's concept of "sovereign biopower", world hunger should be assessed as being regulated by global biopolitical governance, that is, by applying the Foucauldian notion of governmentality on the global level. I claim that by tracing the gaps in the rationalities of such global governmental technologies as the structural adjustment programs of the early 1980s, one can also locate the points where the negative pole of biopower—almost unexplored in governmentality literature—takes its effect.

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Introduction

Today's politics is biopolitics. Neither Michel Foucault nor Giorgio Agamben would dispute this statement; just as neither of the two philosophers would question that contemporary world hunger should be understood as a biopolitical phenomenon. Due to the distinct roles they appropriate to sovereign power, however, their concepts diverge. Beyond presenting an interesting philosophical problem, this divergence gains major relevance in the context of conceptualizing events and processes of international politics as biopolitical. Apparently, theorists of those increasingly significant streams of political science and international relations theory which are centered on the problematic of biopolitics generally tend to take one of the following courses. They either remain within the framework of the Foucauldian concept, implying that in modernity biopolitical care for life superseded the sovereign right to kill and thus decide to investigate productive governmental practices, or accept the consequences of Agamben's declared intent to complete the Foucauldian theory, so representing biopower as the sovereign's power to decide over life or death.

However, conceptual dangers arise along both paths. On the one hand, insistence on viewing biopower solely as a productive power fails to consider its negative potential, although this is indeed inherent in Foucault's conceptualization. On the other hand, endorsing Agamben's approach to locate biopower within the sovereign decision, risks underestimating the incompatibility of sovereign and biopolitical power-practices and forms of knowledge. Since these tendencies currently prevent a more complete interpretation of global biopolitical mechanisms, it seems necessary to call into question the theoretical moves leading to them. Hence, *the aim of this thesis is to provide an understanding of biopower which accounts for its negative pole of "letting die", but does so in a way that does not turn back to the traditional power of the sovereign, for this I believe is not characteristic of global biopolitical*

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governance. Before elaborating this assumption in the chapters that follow, let me contextualize my approach more precisely.

Due to the direction Foucault's theorization took in the late seventies and the early eighties (from the emergence of biopower and governmentality towards the neo-liberal rationalities of government) and to his focus all along constrained to governmental practices within the nation state (and probably even due to the rhythm of publishing and translating the Foucauldian corpus); political scientists first and foremost employed the notion of governmentality for studying such national assemblages of power as the government of poor (Dean 1992), systems of insurance (Defert 1991), and most of all—in the period of the neo-liberal critique of the welfare state—neo-liberal practices of governmentality. Regarding these issue areas, governmental rationality could indeed be traced in the practices aiming to construct self-regulating subjects/objects who—interiorizing the norms of conduct—could be optimally governed towards the betterment of the population.

By applying the Foucauldian concept in various different contexts and periods, this body of work significantly contributed to phasing the notion of biopolitics into the discourse of political science. However, as Mitchell Dean (2002) warns, this kind of theorizing tends to disproportionately concentrate on the practical side of governing, so losing the critical potential of the approach. Further, he argues that governmentality theory must try to avoid the danger of representing contemporary liberal rule as one in which other forms of power (e.g. sovereign or disciplinary) are subsumed into the productive practices of government, since this would imply the assumption that "liberal-democratic forms of rule offer safeguards against aspects of sovereign and biopolitical powers of life and death" (Dean 2002, 122). Therefore, Dean calls for investigating the way these latter powers are being exercised within liberal forms of rule. Although I find his categorization somewhat confusing—since he differentiates governmental, sovereign, and biopolitical powers although governmentality is a

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fundamentally biopolitical system of power—Dean's directions for governmentality theory are indeed relevant for the problems discussed in this thesis.

When in the middle of the nineties, the notion of biopolitics began to infiltrate international relations theory, mainly following the path pioneered by Michael Dillon (1995); theorists seemed to be more aware of both the above dangers. In the work of Dillon and his coauthor Julian Reid, liberal rule on the international level that is, *global liberal governance* (Dillon and Reid 2000, 2001) is never represented as the unproblematic, "relatively benign" version of the rule Foucault called "demonic" (Dean 2002, 122).[1] Through their efforts to elucidate how "liberal peace" always already implies "liberal way of war" evidently reveals their understanding of liberal governmentality as potentially violent, beyond its being productive. This interpretation necessarily leads to the problematization of sovereign power's and biopower's relationship; a relationship which, according to Dillon (1995, 328), beyond conceptualizing as complementary, Foucault himself did not elaborate.[2]

It is thus not surprising that Giorgio Agamben's (1998) attempt to revise the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics from the very aspect of the relationship between sovereign power and biopower was received as a conception indeed to fill the gap.[3] However—as some critiques of Agamben warn—his move to merge biopower into a Schmittian type of sovereign power,[4] and his related claim that politics was *ab ovo* biopolitics is rather problematic; at least when read from a Foucauldian perspective.

Nevertheless, Agamben's notion of the bare life that is, the life that "may be killed and yet not sacrificed", and his idea of the Camp being paradigmatic of our age had enormous impact on the theorization of contemporary (global) biopolitics. As mentioned above, frequently, theorists applying these notions for interpreting current political events do not

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[1] See section 1.3 of this thesis.
[2] See sections 2.2 and 2.2.2 of this thesis.
[3] Notably, for example by the above referred authors. See Dean (2002, 123-127) and Dillon (2003, 2005).
[4] "Sovereign is he who decides on the state of exception" (Schmitt 1985, 5).

challenge Agamben's claim, according to which he builds on and completes the Foucauldian conceptualization. [5] This is especially usual for scholars concerned with humanitarian government because for them—not irrelevantly, for that matter—the condition of the subjects/objects of biopower might seem to be sensitively grasped in the notion of *homo sacer*.

Jenny Edkins' similar endorsement of the Agambenian reconfiguration of biopower is already present in her seminal book on concepts of famine and practices of aid, introducing which she defines biopolitics as "a concern for the regulation and control of populations, which replaces a politically qualified life[6] with bare life" (2000a, 2). Moreover, already here she applies Agamben's idea of the Camp as the space of exception to interpret the operation of famine relief camps. As she further elaborates in an article (2000b) and in the introduction of *Sovereign Lives* (2003), in relief camps sovereignty is reproduced in the form of humanitarian agents; and life of the refugees, just like that of the Jew in the concentration camps, is reduced to bare life that can be killed.

At this point, however, Edkins overlooks the different types of lives biopower and sovereign power entail or, even more, the different ways these systems of power are practiced. As in the first chapter I will show, Edkins' discussion of the practices of relief camps itself is illustrative rather of the productive pole of biopower then of the deductive operation of the sovereign right. Therefore, I suggest that instead of following Agamben in appropriating camp inhabitants with the Holocaust victims' "capacity to be killed", we attribute refugees with the "capacity to be saved". As mentioned above, however, through this alteration I do not intend to replicate the argument of those who criticize Agamben based on a disproportionate emphasis of the productive or nurturing character of biopower. [7] On the contrary, it is rather the deductive side of biopolitics that I aim articulate in this thesis.

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[5] See e.g. Duffield (2004, 8) and Redfield (2005).
[6] For Foucault's original reference to the Aristotelian notion of *bios politikos*, see section 2.1 of this thesis.
[7] See for example Ojakangas (2005) and the discussion of his approach in Chapter 1.

Since I agree with the first sentence of this introduction (that "today's politics is biopolitics"), but I do not subscribe to Agamben's view that thus we are all *homines sacri*, I believe that the clarification of the theoretical bases of biopolitics as a concept is essential for understanding contemporary events. Therefore, in the first two chapters of this thesis I will discuss Agamben's and Foucault's approaches and their implications with special emphasis on the question of their compatibility. Following this theoretical assessment, in the third chapter I will interpret the norm of economic (neo-)liberalization as a means of global biopower for governing the discursive/territorial entity commonly referred to as the Third World. Through analyzing the discourse of this ensemble, I will locate the discursive gaps within which negative pole of biopower is deployed. In the conclusion finally, I will take up the question of a possible understanding of "sovereign biopower" again, and suggest that investigating forms of resistance to global liberal government might help overcome the limitations inherent in Foucault's occasionally ambiguous conceptualization.

Chapter 1 – *Homo sacer* as the biopolitical subject: The biopolitics-concept of Giorgio Agamben

1.1 Introduction

Giorgio Agamben's concept of *homo sacer* introduced in the late nineties made a quick and overwhelming impact on contemporary political philosophy and in the field of poststructuralist IR theory. One of the reasons for this auspicious reception is that his conceptualization of the state of exception, drawing mainly on the work of Karl Schmitt and Walter Benjamin seems to fit perfectly for theorizing the world after 9/11 defined by the "war on terror", and several other issues concerning the government of refugees or the American system of detention in Iraq. In the first and most famous volume of his still ongoing *Homo Sacer* series, Agamben defines his aim as investigating the "hidden point of intersection between the juridico-institutional and the biopolitical models of power" (Agamben 1998, 6). He claims that this point is the space of *bare life*, that is, the life of *homo sacer*. According to his argument, the hidden matrix of our present world is the *Camp*, which constitutes a *space of exception* where all lives turn into bare lives. Not only are thus whole populations of the Third World transformed into bare lives,[8] but so are we all.

In this chapter I will attempt to show that—despite Agamben's claim that he builds on and intends to complete Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics—his conceptualization rests on such theoretical implications which render it incompatible with biopolitics of the Foucauldian tradition. This incompatibility is important because, contrary to a significant segment of international relations theorists concerned with contemporary humanitarianism,[9] I believe that the biopolitics formulated by Agamben do not provide for a fully adequate framework for analyzing issues such as world hunger. While throughout the thesis I will argue

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[8] See Agamben (1998, 180).
[9] See for example Duffield (2004) and Edkins (2000b).

that the Foucauldian concept of governmentality better serves this purpose, as the conclusion of this chapter will suggest, I do not argue for a closure of the interplay of these two concepts, since—as the discussion below shows—it has proved to be rather productive during the last decade of the discipline.

1.2 "A life that can be killed…"

According to Agamben, bare life was not only always already included in the political realm, but this very inclusion constitutes the basis of sovereign power. What is more, he declares that "the production of the biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power" (Agamben 1998, 6). This means that biopolitics does not originate in modernity, as Michel Foucault claims;[10] what we experience in the modern state is only that "the secret tie uniting power and bare life" comes out into the light (Agamben 1998, 6). It is this mysterious bond that Agamben aims at, and it is this point of intersection, with which he opposes Foucault's concept of biopolitics, or rather his interpretation of it.

Based on the different meanings of ancient Greek's two words for 'life' Agamben argues that *zoē*, "the simple fact of living common to all living beings" is inclusively excluded from the political realm right from the beginning. For Agamben, this means that the political realm was never solely that of the *bios*: "the form or way of living proper to an individual or a group" (Agamben 1998, 1), and so Foucault is mistaken when claiming that '[f]or millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence' (Foucault 1990, 143). Thus, what differentiates modern from ancient politics is not that in modernity man's "existence as a living being" (Ibid.) is placed at the center, as Foucault thought, but that the state of exception, founded on bare life's exclusion from and capturing within the political realm, everywhere becomes the rule. According to

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[10] See for example in Foucault (1990).

Agamben, in modernity this process is accompanied by another one, through which the realm of bare life—originally situated at the margins of the political realm—"gradually begins to coincide with the political realm", creating a *zone of indistinction* where "exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, *bios* and *zoē*, right and fact" cannot anymore be told apart (Agamben 1998, 9). An exemplar of such a zone is the Camp.

Bare life represents the intersection of sovereign and bio-power because it is outside the political realm in the same sense as the sovereign who decides on the state of exception is outside the normal order in Schmitt's theory: still in relation to its totality.[11] This common feature, though, does not mean that bare life has the same role in deciding on the state of exception, but bare life is what exists in the state of exception that the sovereign decides upon (Ojakangas 2005). According to Agamben, in modernity, living in a state of exception every life is bare life. All of us are, therefore, *homines sacri* resulting from the state of exception's becoming the rule, since in this state the rule loses its content and "law is in force without significance"; hence, we are *abandoned* by it (Agamben 1998, 51). In this condition, that Agamben calls the "sovereign ban", we are "exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside become indistinguishable" (Agamben 1998, 28). This relation of ban (that is, the relation of exception),[12] can thus be interpreted as a condition in which our lives "are included in the political order in being exposed to an unconditional capacity to be killed" (Agamben 1998, 85).

To sum up, according to Agamben, in modernity the state of exception (decided upon by the sovereign power whose original activity is the creation of the biopolitical body) everywhere becomes the rule, so generalizing the condition of the sovereign ban within which we can all be killed but not sacrificed,[13] thus we are all *homines sacri*.

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[11] Carl Schmitt. 1985. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 7.

[12] See Agamben (1998, 28).

[13] This is the Agambenian definition of *homo sacer*. See for example Agamben (1998, 8).

Although in *Remnants of Auschwitz* Agamben (1999) interprets the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics in a way that can be regarded more loyal,[14] the two concepts still rest on fundamentally different bases. The most striking distinction is Agamben's move to merge biopower into the sovereign power to take life. By claiming that the original activity of the sovereign has always been the creation of the biopolitical body, that is, the bare life,[15] he definitely opposes Foucault's concept of biopower which is analytically different from sovereign power; first of all because it is (at least superficially) a productive power. As Foucault famously formulated their substantially contradicting character in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, while sovereign power has the right "to *take* life or *let* live" (Foucault 1990, 136; original emphasis), bio-power practices the right to *foster* or *disallow* life—that is, the right to make live or let die. Although Foucault argues that sovereign power persists in the normalizing society, biopower, emerging in the wake of modernity, prevails and shifts the aims of politics towards increasing the welfare of the nation. As I will describe in more detail later on in this thesis, this transformation of the objectives of power is made possible by the secularization of pastoral power, that is, the integration of the Judeo-Christian notion of *care* into the techniques of government at the beginning of the modernity. However, at this point where I am concerned rather with emphasizing the differences of Agamben's and Foucault's concept of biopolitics, it is sufficient to underline that the former conception fails to consider this productive feature of biopower by referring to the biopolitical act as the sovereign's decision on bare life as opposed to political life.

Another, rather expressive way of rephrasing the divergence of this sovereign biopolitics circumscribed by Agamben from its Foucauldian original is suggested by *Homo Sacer*'s references to the "normal" political space as the city. This assumption seems to be

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[14] In this text (that has been published as *Homo Sacer III*), contrary to *Homo Sacer* (Agamben 1998) the author presents a reading of a part of Foucault's lectures (Foucault 2003) on biopower and state racism. (These lectures will be crucial for my argument later on in the thesis.)

[15] "…[T]he production of bare life is the original activity of sovereignty" (Agamben 1998, 83).

present in Agamben's conceptualization of the political relation as the relation of ban, and especially in its parable about the legend of the sovereign and the limit-figure of the "werewolf" who is "in its origin the figure of the man who has been banned from the city" (Agamben 1998, 105).[16]

According to Foucault (2000), care as a way of administering individuals entered the scene of state politics only through implementing the techniques of pastoral power. That is when the Judeo-Christian tradition of the *shepherd-flock game*—as opposed to the ancient Greek *city-citizen game* that was "foundational for the Western tradition of sovereignty" (Prozorov 2007, 54)—began to characterize governmental rationality. While I will not list all the aspects in which these two games of power relations differ,[17] I quote Sergei Prozorov's conclusion of the comparison for I believe it is crucial in the context of the Agambenian concept:

> Aside from the right of killing, sovereign power largely does not *care* about its subjects and it is this absence of care that differentiates it from the biopolitical tradition of the shepherd-flock game, whose paradigm of intervention is indeed not decapitation but the loving embrace (Prozorov 2007, 56; original emphasis).

As Mika Ojakangas similarly claims: the main problem with Agamben's argument is that bare life is "defined […] solely by its capacity to be killed" (Ojakangas 2005, 11). According to Ojakangas, although sovereign power and biopower "have ceaselessly intermingled", they operate on the bases of two different types of lives and so there is no such an intersection, within which Agamben locates bare life (Ojakangas 2005, 15). The kind of life essential for bio-power is "life in general", as Foucault refers to it (Foucault 1990, 141); it is this "synthetic notion" of life that "biopower invests and optimizes" (Ojakangas 2005, 11-12). In Ojakangas' interpretation, "[i]t is precisely *care*, the Christian power of love (*agape*) as the opposite of all violence that is at issue in biopower" (Ojakangas 2005, 20, original emphasis).

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[16] Or in an earlier part of the book: "It is as if male *citizens* had to pay for their participation in political life with an unconditional subjection to a power of death, as if life were able to enter the *city* only in the double exception of being capable of being killed and yet not sacrificed" (Agamben 1998, 90; my emphasis).

[17] For this, see Prozorov (2007, 54-55).

According to this understanding, the conclusion that killing is incompatible with a completely biopolitical society, does not seem incoherent.

I would nevertheless argue that such interpretations, through their efforts of opposing productive biopower to violent sovereign power, underestimate or even neglect biopower's second pole, that of the right to let die. (It is this understanding that prevailed in the vast majority of the Foucault-inspired governmentality literature, as we will see in the next chapter.) Contrary to Ojakangas's approach to biopolitics, which aims to completely divide biopower from death, I agree with Michael Dillon who—under the already telling title *Cared to Death*—counters Ojakangas with the argument that "[r]eclaiming the death function is integral to [biopolitics'] logic" (Dillon 2005, 5).

Thus, it is not the presence of violence or power's engagement with death that should be targeted as the points where Agamben most radically diverges from Foucault's concept of biopolitics. It is rather the kind of sovereign violence entailed by the notion of *homo sacer* that has to be understood as the reason for the two theories' incompatibility. It is Agamben's theoretical framework being determined by Schmitt's decisionism that ties it to a juridico-institutional explanation, which is the very paradigm Foucault criticized through his concept of biopolitics. For Agamben, it is the Schmittian sovereign who, by deciding on the state of exception produces bare life that is abandoned by the law for this has lost its content. In other words, it is the suspension of law that creates the conditions within which in modern times—when exception is becoming the rule—everyone is exposed to sovereign violence.

For Foucault, on the other hand, in the age of modernity sovereign rule by the law gradually retreats, parallel to the tendency that results in the strengthening of government by the norm. According to him, from the sixteenth-seventeenth century on, power ceased to focus on the survival of the juridical sovereignty, and it is now the population as a biological phenomenon that is at stake. Therefore, power no longer has to divide its enemies and

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subjects with the force of the sword, that is, the sovereign's right to take life.[18] Contrary to Agamben, who places bare life in the space emerging through the sovereign's decision according to which it can be killed without committing suicide, for Foucault, when biological life of the individual (also as a member of the population—each and every one: *omnes et singulatim*)[19] emerges as the objective of government, beginning with the eighteenth century governmental rationality is increasingly practiced through such power mechanisms that are "irreducible to the representation of law" (Foucault 1990, 89). As he further explains:

> And if it is true that the juridical system was useful for representing albeit in a nonexclusive way, a power that was centered primarily around deduction and death, it is utterly incongruous with the new methods of power whose operation is not ensured by the right but by the technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels ad forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus (Ibid.).

It would be hard to find a more elucidative summary of the contrasts between the two concepts of biopolitics—since not only is Agamben's approach clearly legalistic but it also implies the centrality of sovereign power. It is only sufficient to refer to his reliance on Walter Benjamin's *Critique of Violence*,[20] based on which Agamben argues that "[s]overeign violence opens a zone of indistinction between law and nature, outside and inside, violence and law. And yet the sovereign is precisely the one who maintains the possibility of deciding on the two to the very degree that he renders them indistinguishable from each other" (Agamben 1998, 64).[21]

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[18] "One should not oppose biopower to violence as such but only to the violence of the law (…). What biopower effects in its displacement of the city-citizen game is the de-activation of the transcendent violence of the law in favor of the immanent power of the norm that no longer merely threatens life, deducts from its forces and constrains its energies but rather incites and supports life, maximizes its potential and nurtures its capacities. It is precisely in these operations that biopower *is* violent" (Prozorov 2007, 59).

[19] The two lectures Foucault dedicated to the way pastoral power has been integrated into the art of government, and how it differs from the ancient Greek tradition of the city-citizen game is entitled *Omnes et Singulatim* (Foucault 2000).

[20] Walter Benjamin. 1978. 'Critique of Violence'. In Peter Demetz (ed.). *Walter Benjamin: Reflections*. New York: Schocken Books. For Agamben's analysis of the Benjaminian concept of divine violence and its implications, see especially Agamben (1998, 63-67).

[21] See also: "it is not by chance that Benjamin (…) concentrates on the bearer of the link between violence and law, which he calls 'bare life' (*bloßes Leben*), instead of defining divine violence" (Agamben 1998, 65).

Having demonstrated the distinct types of violence entailed by the Foucauldian notion of biopower and the Agambenian "sovereign biopolitics", in the remaining sections of this chapter I will discuss two interrelated implications of the latter, for which I believe it is inadequate as a framework for studying contemporary political events. It is exactly the above detailed juridical grounding from which these implications derive, so constructing a concept that despite its doubtless merits—which I will also touch upon below—remains limited towards (proper) biopolitical tendencies of modernity, which cannot be interpreted in legal terms.

1.3 "The exception everywhere becomes the rule…"

The first of these theses is one of the main arguments of *Homo Sacer*, according to which the state of exception is "in our age" becoming the rule. That Agamben relies on the opposition of normal versus exceptional is hardly questionable even if he argues that in current times these situations are no longer distinguishable. My main concern here is nevertheless not the complex or, at certain points even problematic conceptualization of this notion of indistinction—which is, according to Peter Fitzpatrick (2005) occasionally paired with the rather delineated conceptions of the juridical order (the normal state) and the state of exception.[22] What seems to prove the limited character of this argument from the perspective of biopolitics is rather that it does not account for the "production of normality"—such biopolitical normality that is not conflated with the violence of law (Lemke 2005, 9). It is for this reason that interpreting the events of our days as evidences for the claim that we have moved into a permanent state of exception is not (always) adequate. While it is comprehensible why the detainment of the "criminals" in the "war on terror" can be viewed as

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[22] "The pervasive state of exception itself is described in terms of structure, permanence, 'a new and stable spatial arrangement', and accorded the ability to occupy 'absolute space' [20, 169-70, 175]. How then, in 'our age' can there be a combination of such determinate identity or attributes with an expansionary indistinction, a combination found in classic conceptions of sovereign power?" (Fitzpatrick 2005, 61)

homines sacri produced within the state of exception,[23] and I even admit the possibility of such interpretations in cases of famines resulting from war-situations, this framework—as I will later show—is not helpful in understanding for example the problem of chronic hunger that cannot plausibly be related to anything such as a state of exception.

Drawing on Mark Neocleous (2006), in the following few paragraphs I briefly present that the argument, according to which we have *recently* moved into the permanent state of exception, can also be undermined. With the aim of challenging the general view of radical left intellectuals—among whom the most prominent and the most often referred is Agamben himself—Neocleous carefully observes the history of states of emergency in the 20th century, region by region. [24] Taking a closer look at the United States, he finds that the country "spent most of the twentieth century, and so far, all of the twenty-first century, in a state of emergency" (Neocleous 2006, 199).[25] The case of the United Kingdom is not much different, as in fact none of his other examples are. Approaching other regions and countries of the world (colonial and post-colonial Africa, Israel, and several authoritarian regimes in Latin-America) with the same inquiry, he observes that states of emergency have been declared in very different parts of the globe for very different reasons; reasons most often far removed from war-situations.[26] As Neocleous warns, this characteristic is not of minor importance; on the contrary, it is a critical attribute of modern states of emergency that they serve as a tool for "the political management of economic regulations and labor relations" (Neocleous 2006, 196).

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[23] See for example Judith Butler. 2004. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso. 50-100; Veronique Pin-Fat and Maria Stern. 2005. 'The Scripting of Private Jessica Lynch: Biopolitics, Gender, and the "Feminization" of the U.S. Military'. *Alternatives* 30: 25-53; especially n70; or Duffield (2004).

[24] Through summarizing Neocleous's argument I stay in line with his terminology—he declaratively uses the phrase "state of emergency" instead of "state of exception" which is Agamben's word choice. For explanation see Neocleous (2006, 210 n1).

[25] See Neocleous' reference to the report of the Special Committee on the Termination of the National Emergency, which (in 1973) stated that "'Since March 9, 1933, the United States has been in a state of National Emergency'" (quoted in Neocleous 2006, 198).

[26] "Much of the New Deal was […] carried out under emergency powers. Two days after his inaugural address US president Franklin Roosevelt referred to a state of national emergency and proclaimed a "bank holiday" forbidding the export of gold and silver and prohibiting transactions in foreign exchange" (Neocleous 2006, 196).

Therefore, it is not only clear that "emergency rule has been crucial to the consolidation of capitalist modernity", but it also has to be considered how quickly emergency powers became normalized, developing a legitimate grounding for such regulations (Neocleous 2006, 204). Considering the proportion of time and the size of territories existing in state of emergency, Neoucleous claims that it is hard to find a period in the past century that can be declared normal. Thus—in an argumental figure very similar to that of Agamben about bare life being always already included in the political realm—he concludes that "the concept of emergency is deeply inscribed within the law and the 'normal' legal condition of the modern state. Emergency powers are permanent because they are part and parcel of the normal mode of governing" (Neocleous 2006, 208). Therefore, the leftist intellectuals' demand for a resistance in the form of returning to the normal order and the rule of law is flawed because it is based on the misjudgment according to which law, both domestic and international, is unproblematic.

In my reading—and it is exactly for this reason I find it surprising that Neocleous does not mention Foucault—conceptualizing the gradually normalized state of emergency as the means of capitalist governance in modernity, Neocleous touches upon the manifestation of what Foucault called the "demonic" configuration of our societies which "happened to combine those two games—the city-citizen game and the shepherd-flock game—in what we call the modern states" (Foucault 2000, 511). As Thomas Lemke opposes Agamben's juridical and the Foucauldian approach: for the latter it is more important to investigate "the endpoint and the result of complex social processes which concentrate the forces inside the social body in such a way as to produce the impression that there is an autonomous centre, or a sovereign source of power" (Lemke 2005, 9). It is indeed this secondary or instrumental sense of sovereign power that Foucault (1991) describes in his lecture on *Governmentality*, underlining again that it is not through law that biopower is practiced—and so it is not law

that has to be placed into the center of resistance to and the theoretical analysis of biopower.
[27]

This conclusion, which seems to be the inverse of Agamben's, has great significance in the context of contemporary humanitarianism, the vast majority of which consists of struggles for the enforcement of social and economic human rights. Accepting the conclusion that law is a secondary instrument for a system of power which operates through other means as well seems to undermine the adequacy of the efforts for enforcing international laws of basic rights, since these efforts fail to consider that such laws are shaped by various power mechanisms in a way that renders them almost unenforceable. That is, for these struggles "[l]aw itself comes to appear as largely unproblematic" (Neocleous 2006, 207).

As radically expressed by Prozorov (2007, 60): "the very notion of human rights is meaningless in the biopolitical terrain of late modernity". This is exactly why we have to be careful with such widely quoted and doubtlessly impressive sentences of *Homo Sacer* as this one: "the separation between humanitarianism and politics that we are experiencing today is the extreme phase of the separation of the rights of the man from the rights of the citizen" (Agamben 1998, 133). For such claims unfortunately do not account for the origins of these basic rights, which on the one hand are rightly defined by Prozorov (Ibid.) as the "civic rights of Western liberal democracies" resulting from the political struggles fought in this part of the world; and on the other hand are described by Foucault (1990) as the modern remainders of the utopias of more ambitious times: the demands for the "right to life" and others of this kind emerged exactly when the sovereign right to take life had been subordinated to biopower, and

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[27] "…with sovereignty the instrument that allowed it to achieve its aim—that is to say, obedience to the laws—was the law itself; law and sovereignty were absolutely inseparable. On the contrary, with government it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say to employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics—to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved" (Foucault 1991, 95).

exactly this is the reason why, according to Foucault, classic juridical order is incapable to handle the demands entailed by these rights.[28]

Furthermore, I believe this incapability prevents those initiatives from succeeding which strive for rendering justiciable the so-called famine crimes. These efforts, which experienced an intensification during the years of enthusiasm about the International Criminal Court; (present for instance in the work of David Marcus, Jenny Edkins, and, in a slightly different sense, Alex de Waal) promote the criminalization of such governmental policies which violate peoples' basic rights.[29]

Without denying the need for holding governments responsible, in my view, we have to see the limitations of this approach in its being tied to a (however corrected) legal system so necessarily constraining the scope of cases that can be dealt within it. Although I seemingly departed from Agamben's biopolitics, the second implication to be discussed below, suffers from similar problems.

1.4 "The Camp as the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West"

As a consequence of the claim that in our age the exception has become the rule, Agamben argues that the Camp is the hidden matrix of our world, since it is the Camp that opens up in the state of exception; the Camp is the "realization" of the exception.[30] Within this space of exception thus, all of us are *homines sacri*. In what follows, I would like to challenge this "Camp as paradigm" thesis first from a general and then from a more specific aspect.

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[28] See Foucault (1990, 145).

[29] See David Marcus. 2003. 'Famine Crimes in International Law'. *The American Journal of International Law* 97: 245-281; Jenny Edkins. 2002. 'Mass Starvations and the Limitations of Famine Theorising'. *IDS Bulletin* 33, no. 4: 1-6; Alex de Waal. 1997. *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*. London: African Rights and the International African Institute.

[30] The third part of *Homo Sacer* is entitled *The Camp as Biopolitical Paradigm of the Modern*. See especially Agamben (1998, 170).

Approaching it from the larger perspective, the claim that we are all reduced to bare life raises a rather straightforward problem, namely the problem of distinction. Not only does the question concerning the sovereign subject producing these bare lives emerge, but it seems that the notion of bare life constantly exposed to the threat of death fails to differentiate between the lives of a West-European welfare state's citizen and that of the hungry citizen of a poor country in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although both types of lives are objects (and subjects) of biopolitical government, as I showed above, Agamben's conceptualization does not account for this non-sovereign biopower. Therefore, Lemke is absolutely right in claiming that "even if all subjects are *homines sacri*, they are so in very different ways" (Lemke 2005, 7).[31] As he explains, this lack of differentiation is not accidental; it originates in Agamben's neglect of biopolitical techniques characterizing modernity. As a further reason, Lemke quite sensibly points to the feature of Agamben's camp-conception, which is represented as a line drawn between bare life and political existence, and not as "an internally differentiated continuum" (Ibid.). Consequentially, Agamben does not focus on lives inside the camp, "but only on death as the materialization of a borderline" (Lemke 2005, 8). This immediately tells us why Agamben maintains that "biopolitics continually turns into thanatopolitics" (Agamben 1998, 153).

Viewed from a more specific perspective, this focus on death instead of the difference between the values of lives within the Camp seems even more problematic. In an article introducing a special biopolitics-issue of *Alternatives*, Jenny Edkins (2000b) interprets the operation of famine-relief camps through the framework provided by *Homo Sacer*. Since her analysis is an exemplary piece of the poststructuralist stream of international relations theory that quickly integrated Agamben's concept, it is worth considering how the notion of bare life operates in this context.

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[31] "It remains woefully unclear to what extent and in what manner the comatose in the hospitals share the fate of prisoners in concentration camps; whether the asylum seekers in the prisons are bare life to the same degree and in the same sense as the Jews in the Nazi camps" (Lemke 2005, 7).

In line with Agamben's argument,[32] Edkins claims that these camps are analogous to the Nazi concentration camps in the sense that they too "open up" in the state of emergency and they too transform their inhabitants into bare lives. Being constituted as zones of indistinction, these camps produce their sovereignties. Edkins argues that just as humanitarian agencies in relief-camps, in the refugee camps of Kosovo, NATO was produced as sovereignty. These sovereignties, in turn, produce bare lives, that is, the lives of *homines sacri*. As we know by now, *homo sacer* is a life that can be killed (but not sacrificed).[33] Is this the life of inhabitants of famine relief-camps and refugees? Can we equate the life of the Jew in the concentration camp with the life of the relief-camp inhabitant? Can we really overlook their difference on the basis that they are both stripped of their rights as citizens (not to say of their "additional capacity for a political existence")?

According to Agamben the killing of the Jew "constitutes neither capital punishment nor a sacrifice, but simply the actualization of a mere 'capacity to be killed' inherent in the condition of the Jew as such" (Agamben 1998, 114). In my view, we cannot assign the same capacity to the refugee. Edkins herself departs from this conception when she writes that "victims appear only as a form of life that can be saved" (Edkins 2000b, 6). Therefore, in the case of the refugees we should rather talk about their "capacity to be saved". But then we are already under the domain of biopower and not that of sovereign power. The context of the arbitrary decision of life and death that the relief workers have to make is not the intention of exterminating the camp-inhabitants but that of helping survive those favored by biopolitical terms of selection, that is, the context of biopower.[34] This is even more striking when Edkins refers to the experiences of an aid worker who said that "the main objective of the camp

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[32] See especially Agamben (1998, 174).

[33] "By tracing the form of the camp through a series of locations—Nazi concentration camps, refugee and famine relief camps in Africa, and camps for refugees in Kosovo—I am not intending to equate the experience of the inhabitants of these different camps in general terms. I only wish to draw a parallel in one sense: in all these locations we find people who are produced as bare life, a form of life that can be killed but not sacrificed" (Edkins 2000b, 5).

[34] "The physical condition of the refugees was by contrast a focus of attention, with data being collected on births and deaths, disease, and nutritional status" (Edkins 2000b, 7).

officials was 'to get the death rates down'" (Edkins 2000b, 7). The officials' imperative quoted by Edkins is frightfully similar to what Foucault says about the aims of biopolitics: '[t]he mortality rate has to be modified or lowered; life expectancy has to be increased; the birth rate has to be stimulated' (Foucault 2003, 246).

To be sure, I do not intend to repeat Ojakangas's mistake of neglecting the death-function of biopower. However, his reasoning that sovereignty is "the main fiction of juridico-institutional thinking" seems to explain the above limitation of the Agambenian biopolitics in the context of relief camps, let alone in the context of chronic hunger (Ojakangas 2005, 14). As later chapters will show, governing those people who suffer from severe poverty and constant hunger cannot be read through the prism provided by *Homo Sacer*, at least if we wish to apply a strict interpretation of Agamben's concept. Beyond the concerns raised in this chapter, the tragedy of chronically hungry people even more clearly demonstrates the boundaries of the juridical approach. The several million citizens of democratic India (for example) stricken by circumstances within which they can *bare*ly survive cannot be regarded to be stripped of their rights as citizens—at least not in the sense that Agamben's paradigmatic *homo sacer*—the Jews of the Nazi Germany—were legally denied of all their citizens' rights.

1.5 Conclusion

The conceptual difference of Agamben's and Foucault's notions of biopolitics cannot be overlooked. As Agamben builds on a decisionistic conception of sovereignty with its correlative notion of law, his approach to biopolitics cannot be regarded fully compatible with that of Foucault who firmly questioned the adequacy of such philosphico-juridical discourse. Hence, the context within which his claim "in political thought and analysis, we still have not cut off the head of the king" has to be understood (Foucault 1990, 88-89).

As a final attempt to justify to the claim that Agamben did not mean to decapitate the sovereign either, let me quote *his* call for political thought.

> It would be more honest and, above all, more useful to investigate carefully the juridical procedures and deployments of power by which human beings could be so completely deprived of their rights and prerogatives that no act committed against them could appear any longer as a crime (Agamben 1998, 171).

And still, if it is possible to read the *Homo Sacer* less rigorously—as many theorists do—it immediately shows the power of its metaphors. Besides, Agamben does seem right in his intention to articulate a power due to which—as Maria Margaroni interprets it—death is "un-heroic, unaccountable" and "simply occurs in/because of abandonment and in parallel to the biotechnologies of care" (Margaroni 2005, 35). Thus, the attempts for harmonizing the Foucauldian tradition with Agamben's insights must be considered. Beyond such concepts as that of Mitchell Dean (2002) who bridges the two theories with his notion of "delegation of sovereignty"; accounts of those concerned with contemporary humanitarianism have to be consulted too.[35]

Therefore, throughout the following chapters, I will attempt to stay in line with the belief that—despite the above outlined concerns—the interplay of the biopolitics-concepts of Foucault and Agamben should not be closed by declaring one of them as universally applicable to the global governance of hunger. The significant size of philosophical and social science literature produced during the past decade since *Homo Sacer* was published (in English) not only demonstrates that this interplay is indeed inspiring, but can also be widely relied on through my inquiry.

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[35] See for example Duffield (2004) and Peter Redfield. 2005. 'Doctors, Borders, and Life in Crisis'. *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 3: 328-361.

Chapter 2 – Power to make live and let die: The biopolitics-concept of Michel Foucault

2.1 Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, contrary to Agamben who claims that politics was always already biopolitics, Michel Foucault argues that biopolitics emerged with modernity. What is more, Western societies reached "the threshold of modernity" when the biological lives of their populations occupied the center of politics. The description of this shift in the focus of power is the exact context of Foucault's famous sentence, quoting which is hardly missed when discussing biopolitics: "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 1990, 143).

The Foucauldian concept of biopolitics invigorated certain streams of political philosophy and international relations theory during the last decades of the 20th century, mostly through the work of Anglo-American scholars, and mostly with an explicit emphasis on Foucault's theoretical invention: "governmentality". In what follows, I reconstruct Foucault's biopolitics-concept as elaborated in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1990) and the Collège de France lectures of two academic years: *"Society Must be Defended"* held in 1976 and *Security, Territory, Population* of 1978 (Foucault 2003, 2007). Through discussing Foucault's key concepts such as bio-power, biopolitics, and governmentality, I will outline the other pole of the theoretical interplay that I referred to regarding Agamben's work, and argue that in several respects, the Foucauldian concept seems to be more applicable for analyzing contemporary world hunger than Agamben's is.

2.2 The power over life

The crucial terms upon which this thesis is centered were first published in December 1976, in *La Volenté de Savoir* (The Will to Knowledge), that is, in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. The part of the book mostly concerned with biopolitics is its fifth chapter, which is dedicated to the *"*Right of Death and Power over Life". While it is not always so suggested by the literature,[36] this chapter is best read as a parallel to the lectures of the same year and to the last lecture of the series in particular.[37] Although the points of departure of the two texts are different—the war of races in case of the chronologically prior *"Il faut défendre la société"* ("Society Must Be Defended"), and sexuality as a political issue in case of the book—they both conclude with the opposition between the sovereign right of life and death and the new technologies of power emerging at the dawn of modernity. It is through this contrast—to which much space was dedicated in the previous chapter—that the essence of these new techniques can most sensibly be grasped.

While the difference between the sovereign's right to take life and let live, and the power to make live and let die is indeed crucial (Foucault 2003, 240-241; 1990 136-138), here I will rather emphasize that despite the sequential character of their evolution, these two types of power are not at all mutually exclusive.[38] In Foucault's understanding, sovereign power and biopower, complemented with the third (chronologically the second) system, that of disciplinary power, make up a sovereignty-discipline-governmental management triangle, all the power-corners of which are practiced through their specific technologies based on their specific rationalities, so adding up to the governmentality of modern societies.[39] As it is made

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[36] See Elden (2002, 127).

[37] Lecture held on 17th March 1976. See Foucault (2003, 239-264).

[38] However, it is interesting that despite the very similar formulation of the emergence of biopower in the lectures and *The Will to Knowledge*, in the latter Foucault puts it this way: "One might say that the ancient right to *take* life and *let* live was replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death" (Foucault 1990, 138; original emphasis).

[39] "So we should not see things as the replacement of a society of sovereignty with a society of discipline, and then of a society of discipline by a society, say, of government. In fact, we have a triangle: sovereignty,

clear by Foucault's argument in several different contexts regarding the relation of two distinct systems of power (e.g. disciplinary versus sovereign [40] or disciplinary versus normalizing power [41]), these types of power "do not exist on the same level" but can "permeate" each other (Foucault 2003, 241), and "can be articulated with each other" (Foucault 2003, 250).

It is this very heterogeneity that manifests itself in the "demonic" combination characterizing our societies, and it is exactly this multiplicity that has to be studied if we are to understand the operations of power relations. Therefore, it is sensible to describe biopower through Foucault's conceptualization of the way it intersects with disciplinary power on the one hand, and with sovereign power on the other. In the following two subsections, this is what I do.

2.2.1 The norm

The importance of the norm versus law has been touched upon above in relation to the opposing tendencies of their significance. In what follows, on the contrary, the focus is not on the process due to which law gradually started to weaken parallel to the ascending importance of norms; rather it is on the role that norm plays in the relationship of disciplinary and governmental powers. But how exactly should we understand these powers? Why does their distinction seem increasingly relevant for Foucault while elaborating the concept of biopolitics?

The most evident difference between the two types of power relations is the subject they are targeted on. Disciplinary techniques, emerging in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were directed towards the individual body—a phrase both elements of which have to

discipline, and governmental management, which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanisms" (Foucault 2007, 108).
[40] See Foucault (2003, 36-40).
[41] See Foucault (2003, 250-253).

be stressed. Disciplinary devices aimed at the individuals in that such techniques strove for "their separation, their alignment, their serialization, and their surveillance" (Foucault 2003, 242). However, they also centered on the body of the individual with the goal of taking control over it, in order to make it more productive (possibly in a cost-effective way; through exercise and drill, for instance). At the focus of these techniques, thus, we find "the body as a machine" (Foucault 1990, 139).[42]

On the other hand, the non-disciplinary technologies of power which appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century are "applied not to the men-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species" (Foucault 2003, 242). For this type of power men (and women) are not seen as the multiplicity of individual bodies, they instead represent a "global mass" which can be assessed through its "overall" processes of births and deaths—this power is therefore "massifying"; this power is *biopower* (Foucault 2003, 243).

As for the "content" of biopolitics of the human race (as opposed to an *anatomo* politics of the human body), Foucault specifies the following domains. First of all the processes of population: tendencies of population growth, mortality, morbidity, and productivity will become the objects of knowledge; so emerge disciplines such as statistics and demography. This knowledge then grounds the techniques of power that intervene on the level of population aiming to create an equilibrium within which the productivity of the society can be optimized.

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[42] "This power over life evolved in two basic forms…[that] constituted […] two poles…One of these poles—the first to be formed, it seems—centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into the systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the *disciplines*: an *anatomo politics of the human body* (Foucault 1990, 139; original emphasis). For the elaborate concept of disciplinary power see Foucault, Michel. Foucault, Michel. 1982. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Harmondsworth: Peregrine Books; Idem. 2006. *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973-74*. London: Palgrave Macmillan; Idem. 2004. *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975*. New York: Picador.

Concerning those cases (accidents and "various anomalies") and those people (old, insane, permanently sick) whose optimal productivity cannot be sought, secondly, biopolitics establishes institutions that will complement the economically irrational and far too spontaneously operating institutions of charity (that are mainly under church control), and will work based on insurance and public or private savings (Foucault 2003, 244).

The third field of intervention Foucault defines is that of the environment—be it natural (e.g. swamps) or man-made (e.g. towns)—for it also affects the life of the population. All these domains entail the activation of such mechanisms that are alien for sovereign or disciplinary power; since here the targeted phenomena exist not in the society or for the individual, but on the level of population—a mass characterized by processes that have to be dealt with generally. Thus, biopower intervenes into these processes through *security mechanisms* which—although they share disciplinary mechanisms' goals to maximize efficiency—substantially differ from these in the sense that they mean to control the "man-as-species" with regulations, "ensuring that they are not disciplined but regularized" (Foucault 2003, 247).

Beyond these differences, nevertheless, disciplinary and regulatory mechanisms indeed intersect. Foucault's (2003) example of sexuality can be elucidative here,[43] since it is easy to see that whereas sexuality appears on the level of the individual body—where it will encounter disciplinary power—through reproduction it also affects the population, and thus it will be the object of regularization. Thus, sex can serve as "a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species" (Foucault 1990, 146). And the *mode* of access, so to say, was *the norm*. With its ability to control the processes operating both on the individual and the general levels, the norm became "the element that circulates between the two" (Foucault 2003, 252-253)—hence, the *normalizing society* emerged.

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[43] "Sexuality exists at the point where body and population meet" (Foucault 2003, 251-252).

According to Foucault, the normalizing society originates in sovereign power's incapability to manage a society that experienced industrialization and demographic explosion.[44] It was disciplinary power that represented the "first adjustment" with its effects at the individual body through surveillance and training, nevertheless, it seems that for optimization of government a second adjustment was also needed, and was brought about by biopower and its "complex systems of coordination and centralization" (Foucault 2003, 250).

This interpretation doubtlessly implies a slightly different (if not contradictory) relation of sovereign power and biopower than what in the previous chapter was said to be Foucault's conception. However, the contradiction is only superficial. Although it is true that the problematic is perceived and reflected upon by sovereign power,[45] this does not falsify the claim that the regulatory techniques deployed for the government of the population prevail over the practice of traditional sovereign rights. It cannot be otherwise, since the operation of a productive power such as biopolitics is only possible this way; and the productive character of the above enumerated biopolitical aims is hardly arguable. Again, it is only sufficient to recite the idea of the triangle of power systems to understand their heterogeneous and contemporaneous existence, the most interesting and the most fatal aspect of which is the oscillation between sovereign and biopower. In the next section, this interaction will be discussed.

2.2.2 Biopower that kills

So far it has been repeated a several times that traditional sovereign power was practiced through the sovereign's power to take life. Foucault's conceptualization however

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[44] "A normalizing society is the outcome of a technology of power centered on life" (Foucault 1990, 144).

[45] "[T]he problem of sovereignty was never more sharply posed than at this moment, precisely because it was no longer a question, as in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of how to deduce an art of government from theories of sovereignty, but rather, given the existence and deployment of an art of government, what juridical form, what institutional form, and what legal basis could be given to the sovereignty typical of a state (Foucault 2007, 106).

made it clear that this right to kill is forced onto the way of gradual retreat, so creating room for biopower that has a completely different aim: to foster the life of the population. The absurdity of this claim (especially in this oversimplified interpretation) is striking when compared to the history of humanity from the eighteenth century on. As Foucault (2003) observes, here we encounter a paradox, to which he immediately offers a resolution.

According to the argument of *"Society Must Be Defended"*, the phenomenon that makes it possible for the power of death to "be exercised in a political system centered upon biopower" is *racism*. Although Foucault does not claim that racism first emerged as late as in modernity, but he holds that the evolution of biopower "inscribes it in the mechanisms of the State", so rendering it into a basic technology of power without which a modern state can hardly operate (Foucault 2003, 254).

Although this claim might sound radical, later sections of this chapter will show that racism is in fact essential for the death function of normalizing societies of modern states, as well as of levels beyond nation state. Especially if our understanding endorses the Foucauldian definition of racism that primarily emphasizes its fragmenting function, according to which it "create[s] caesuras within the biological continuum addressed by biopower" (Foucault 2003, 255).[46] These caesuras then define who is to be made live, and who can be let die.[47]

Further, Foucault defines a second function of racism; one which, so to say, legitimates the first one by transforming the relationship of war (that characterizes sovereign power) into a "biological-type" relationship, in which killing the other, that of the inferior race will "make life in general healthier". Within this relationship, those on the other side of

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[46] This understanding is, I believe, very similar to what Randolph B. Persaud and R. B. J. Walker refers to as "othering": "Othering is a complex of cultural and political practices that instantiate identity by framing and reproducing difference" (Persaud and Walker 2001, 375).

[47] "What in fact is racism? It is primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die…It is a way of separating out the groups that exist within a population" (Foucault 2003, 255).

the division—that was established by racism's first function—will appear not as political enemies, but as biological threats. Clearly, this representation almost seems to be tailor-made for biopower, which strives for the improvement of the species/race, and so these threats are the very phenomena it aims to eliminate with its regulatory practices. Thus, killing is legitimate because the risks endangering the superior race have to be eliminated. Hence, racism "is the precondition for exercising the right to kill" (Foucault 2003, 256).

Before taking a small but definite step to the issue contemporary world hunger by further elaborating the notion of biological risk and its antidote that is security; at least two more things need to be said about racism operating under biopower. On the one hand, beyond the disciplines emerging with and for biopolitics (e.g. statistics and demography), state racism was further linked to and grounded by the biological theory of this period: *evolutionalism*.[48] Thus, not only it is clear how the Nazi ideology fits into this science-framed biopolitical picture of race hierarchies, colonization ("or in other words, colonizing genocide") can be seen as approved by evolutionism too (Foucault 2003, 257).

On the other hand, racism must not always be understood as concerned with (quasi)biological races within the human species. As alluded to by Foucault in his sentences on evolutionism,[49] class struggle can also be read as racism. Ágnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér affirm this assumption in their *Biopolitics* and as illustration, they quote Solzhenytsin: "Am I a bourgeois? Did my father give me a different sort of red or white of corpuscles in my blood? That's why I tell you yours isn't a class attitude but a racial attitude. You are a racist!" (Fehér and Heller 1994, 33).

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[48] A lengthy but important quote from the lecture: "Basically, evolutionism, understood in the broad sense—or in other words, not so much Darwin's theory itself as a set, a bundle, of notions (such as: the hierarchy of species that grow from a common evolutionary tree, the struggle for existence among species, the selection that eliminates the less fit)—naturally became within a few years during the nineteenth century not simply a way of transcribing a political discourse in scientific clothing, but a real way of thinking about the relations between colonization, the necessity of wars, criminality, the phenomena of madness and mental illness, the history of societies with their different classes, and so on. Whenever, in other words, there was a confrontation, a killing or the risk of death, the nineteenth century was quite literally obliged to think about them in the form of evolutionism" (Foucault 2003, 256-257).

[49] See previous note.

Further, Fehér and Heller refer the reader to Hannah Arendt who points to the possibly racist and evolutionist character of class struggle when she claims: "The 'natural' law of the survival of the fittest is just as much a historical law and could be used as such by racism as Marx's law of the survival of the most progressive class" (Arendt 1979, 463). When during the lectures of *"Society Must Be Defended"* Foucault (2003) refers to Stalinism's redefinition of racism as class struggle,[50] he might have built on Arendt's opinion.[51] In any case, the continuity between Fascism and Stalinism that was manifest in their biopolitical practices of exclusion and extermination, was doubtlessly essential for Foucault,[52] and should not be neglected by our interpretation of contemporary events either; not so much for the currency of totalitarianisms, but rather for their operation with social racism.

2.3 *"It may well be that some people die of hunger after all"*

Returning now to the notion of threat that legitimates biopower's occasionally fatal racism, there still are some details of the Foucauldian concept left to be introduced. Assuming that scarcity is the paradigmatic biological threat that is usually related to world hunger,[53] it is sensible to reconstruct how Foucault points to the emergence of security mechanisms when discussing this phenomenon. Through his account here again we can observe the shifting mechanisms of power from disciplinary to normalizing societies.

Departing from the enumeration of the measures taken against scarcity in France of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Foucault (2007) claims that in this period (that is, the period of disciplinary power) food shortages were countered by a juridical and political

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[50] "After all, it should not be forgotten that toward the end of his life, Marx told Engels in a letter written in 1882 that 'You know very well where we found our idea of class struggle; we found it in the work of the French historians who talked about the race struggle'" (Foucault 2003, 79). C.f. (Foucault 2003, 82-83).
[51] See Alessandro Fontana and Mauro Bertani in their *Situating the Lectures* of *"Society Must Be Defended"* (Foucault 2003, 286-287).
[52] See Fontana and Bertani in Foucault (2003, 276-277).
[53] See Edkins (2000a, especially 1-2; 15-37).

system whose primary aim was to prevent scarcity. To be sure, the final aim was to prevent town people from revolting, but in this system of power, this was sought through a series of "anti-scarcity" regulatory measures that tried to keep the price of the grain low and prohibited export (so as to maintain control over the prices in the towns).

Later on in the eighteenth century, however, this juridical and political system became under attack by the physiocratic doctrine, along the lines of which "freedom of commerce and of the circulation of grain began to be laid down as the fundamental principle of economic government" (Foucault 2007, 33). In the context of governing scarcity this means the abolition of the system that tried to prevent it from taking place, and deploying instead *apparatuses of security*. This implies that scarcity will no longer be the evil to be avoided, it should rather "be considered as a phenomenon that, in the first place, is natural, and so consequently, secondly, neither good, nor evil" (Foucault 2007, 36). Thus, apparatuses of security should seek to manage the natural processes of grain shortages and price increases. Furthermore, scarcity will not any longer be viewed as bad fortune or God's punishment, but as a chimera; as a failure.[54]

This latter shift has major consequences for conceptualizing hunger too. According to Foucault, in the period of disciplinary power, when conceived as a scourge, the event of scarcity "was both an individual and collective phenomenon, and in the same way that people suffered hunger, so entire populations and the nation suffered hunger" (Foucault 2007, 41). Under governmental power on the other hand, food shortage at the population level became unimaginable, and scarcity started to be conceived as something that emerges on certain markets affecting some people. This naturally derives from the mechanisms that sought to "[let] things take their course"—and so it might be perceived that "there was some scarcity,

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[54] Foucault adopts Louis-Paul Abeille's phrase used in his *Lettre d'un négociant sur la nature du commerce des grains* written in 1763 (Foucault 2007, 35-38). For the construction of famine as *failure*, see Edkins (2000a, 14; 53-54).

some dearness, some difficulty in buying wheat, and consequently some hunger, and it may well be that some people die of hunger after all" (Foucault 2007, 42).

According to Foucault (2007), this is exactly the way that hunger-related deaths have to be conceived in order to maintain the "chimera"-conception of scarcity. This sort of natural death—natural in the sense that it is natural that food shortages occur—will represent the individual level (or rather that of the multiplicity of individuals). However, according to a break that occurred in the scourge-conception of scarcity which entailed a notion of collective and an individual suffering at the same time, governmental power could now take its effect on two separate levels, the second of which was the population level.

At this act of fragmentation, I think, we encounter biopower proper; since it is this latter level, that of the population, which is "pertinent for the government's economic-political action", while the former level of the multiplicity of individuals "will only be pertinent to the extent that, properly managed, maintained, and encouraged, it will make possible what one wants to obtain at the level that is pertinent" (Foucault 2007, 42).

Hence, the way biopower practices the power to let die, in a situation where the population (that is, the biological domain that is to be controlled) is faced with a biological threat. As for the notion of social racism, in my view, it can be said that through reciting a distinction made by Abeille, Foucault locates this aspect of biopower too. In his interpretation, on the one hand, Abeille states that the individuals who behave as members of the population are those, who "conduct themselves properly". There are, on the other hand, individuals who "resist the regulation of the population" and this proves, according to Abeille, that they "do not really belong to the population" and thus have to be differentiated from the former—this domain, for Abaille, is that of the "people".[55] "The people are those who, refusing to be the population, disrupt the system" (Foucault 2007, 44).

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[55] "They really act as members of the population. But suppose that precisely in a given market, in a given town, instead of waiting, instead of putting up with scarcity, instead of accepting costly grain, instead of accepting

At this point, it is important to mention Agamben's (1998) meditation about the term *people*; not least because it demonstrates again his reliance on the juridico-philosophical discourse. There are two key aspects which I would like to emphasize. On the one hand, Agamben's observes that "'people' […] indicates the poor, the disinherited, and the excluded" in every modern European language that derived this word from its Latin equivalent—which also has this sense, besides that of the "complex of citizens as a unitary political body" (Agamben 1998, 176). Thus, Abaille's word choice was not due to chance.

On the other hand, it is again clear from Agamben's argument that he concentrates on the juridico-political aspects of power when focusing on the political existence or non-existence of the people, thus on the fact whether they had the rights of citizens or were denied of these. As I argued previously, this perspective is constrained, inasmuch as it connects abandonment with the juridical status of the individual (or with the permanent state of exception in which law looses its content). Although some points of Agamben's theorization seem very similar to that of Foucault, their different theoretical grounding is clearly apparent. As here:

> It is as if what we call "people" were in reality not a unitary subject but a dialectical oscillation between two opposite poles: on the one hand, the set of People as a whole political body, and on the other, the subset of the people as a fragmentary multiplicity of needy and excluded bodies…(Agamben 1998, 177)

Two differences must be noticed. First, Agamben identifies integration with political existence (and defines this pole as that of the *bios*), second, the excluded are those denied political existence by sovereign power (and thus represent *zoē*/bare life exposed to death).

Foucault nevertheless, in accordance with the notion of governmentality, conceptualizes integration as something conditioned on individual behavior, that is, the individual's acceptance of being conducted. Being excluded also depends on the choice of the

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consequently to buy little, instead of accepting hunger, and instead of waiting for the wheat to arrive in sufficient quantity so that prices fall (…) suppose that instead of all of this, (…) the people throw themselves on the supplies, that they even seize them without paying (…) and everything jams" (Foucault 2007, 43).

individual; if he resists government, he will not enjoy its benefits, and further, since he disrupts the system, he is responsible for threatening the well-being of the population. Either way, he can be blamed for his decision for behaving irresponsibly; we thus cannot trace an act of sovereign exclusion in this process.

Therefore, in my opinion, Foucault's distinction between the well-behaving population and the non-behaving people fits more adequately with the mechanisms of biopower. According to this, the creation of such fragmentation within the governed domain is borne by the complexity of intersecting systems of powers. In an interview on *Social Security*, I believe, Foucault refers to the way such differentiation operates in modern societies:

> Our systems of social security impose a particular way of life to which individuals are subjected, and any person or group that, for one reason or another, will not or cannot embrace that way of life is marginalized by the very operation of the institutions (Foucault 1988, 164).[56]

It may not be an exaggeration to claim that here we have reached the crucial point of the Foucauldian concept of biopower; or at least the one I find crucial for the interpretation of contemporary world hunger. However, before concluding what has been said in the above sections, I make a digression, although not very far away, with the aim to illustrate how the notions of racism, population and scarcity can add up in a biopolitical discourse.

2.4 Distribution around the norm of birth reduction

Observing population discourses through the prism of the Foucauldian biopolitics, Attila Melegh (2006) provides a very sensible reading of the twentieth century American population policy that gained most of its inspiration from the neo-Malthusian school.[57] While

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[56] Further, this part of the interview affirms the prevalence of the division among pertinent and non-pertinent: "It can probably be said that certain phenomena of marginalization are bound up with factors of separation between an 'assured' population and an 'exposed' population (Foucault 1988, 164). Except that here both domains are referred to as *population*. I will return to this problematic below.
[57] Thomas Malthus (1766-1834): in his *Essay on the Principle on Population* Malthus (1798) elaborated his notion of overpopulation that is, when—due to their different pace of growth—population exceeds the resources

there is no need to reconstruct his whole argument here, his overview of the *theory of demographic transition* is worth mentioning, for it nicely underlines the above Foucauldian theses.

After analyzing Malthus's notion of overpopulation and its twentieth century application; Melegh concludes that the American population discourse—with view to both the domestic and the non-Western world—was determined by the Malthusian correlation of the "situation of global competition and the tendency of the lower classes of the population to expand" (Melegh 2006, 55). This discourse was successful in activating the general sense of biological threat, since it implied that the subsistence of middle classes (the well-conducted and so "assured" [domestic] *population*) was endangered by the rapid growth of the lower classes (the unmanageable *people* [of underdeveloped countries]).

In the mid-forties then, this implication was further affirmed, and what is more, appeared as a scientific theory elaborated by Frank Notestein, who first presented it in the 1945 United Nations Food for the World (!) conference. Very briefly, the main thesis of the theory is that modernization, industrialization, and the consequent increase of the population's quality of life indirectly correlates with birth-rates. Based on this claim, Notestein divided the globe into three regions: the West that had already reached this threshold of modernization, Eastern and Western Europe, which is on its way progressing towards the goal, and the "post-colonial Third World", which is at the very beginning of the transition (Melegh 2007, 60).

As Melegh rightly emphasizes, the key element in this conceptualization is on the one hand, the way it re-inscribes the notion of linear modernization into its population-based division (one could also associate here to Foucault's broadly understood notion of evolutionism); while on the other hand, although not deliberately,[58] it also "allow[ed] itself to

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of nature. Although this thesis has never been justified, its impact is enormous (see e.g. cited works of Edkins and Melegh).

[58] "[T]he theory of modernization definitely did not argue on the bases of unchanging, 'inborn' traits of different social groups or societies…" (Melegh 2006, 61).

be transcribed into racist discourses as understood by Foucault" (Melegh 2006, 61). Bearing these aspects, the demographic transition theory could serve as a ground for immigration control policies, since the source countries of immigration were those of the underdeveloped regions, representing the largest birth-rates. Biopolitical interventions were further legitimized when, as Melegh describes, not independently from the generally perceived communist expansion Notestein updated his theory and argued that since the underdeveloped parts of the world "cannot afford to await the automatic processes of social change", it is necessary to intervene. Hence, the theoretical background for birth-control policies that, as Melegh notes, were presented within a war-discourse. "To achieve the precisely stated goals of various programs there was to be a 'war' on 'dangerous' elements using a new 'arsenal' of scientific results" (Melegh 2006, 66). Thus, there was nothing scandalous in the American efforts forcing developing countries to adopt population control measures, even if the distribution of aid was tied to it.[59]

Doubtlessly, the Foucauldian notion of war of races based on biological threat is highly explanatory in this context. It is not hard to see the biopolitical character of the elements activated: race, scarcity, lower classes, and the construction of these as threats that have to be eliminated, are all paradigmatic spheres for biopower to govern along the lines of fragmentation drawn in the (global) population.

2.5 "Disallowing life to the point of death"

Concluding this chapter, in the following paragraphs I will summarize the arguments for the claim that the above discussed Foucauldian concept of biopolitics and biopower as the power over life is more able to serve as a framework for interpreting contemporary world hunger than Agamben's sovereign biopolitics.

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[59] This aspect of neo-Malthusianism will yet be mentioned below.

As the idea of the triangle of powers (sovereignty-discipline-biopower) implies, there is no need for strictly opposing biopower to the sovereign's right to take life; Foucault does not claim that biopolitical government replaced sovereign power completely, neither does he argue that killing is completely alien from biopower. In this chapter we saw that racism creates a sphere (threshold?) where biopower and sovereignty intersect, and so sovereign power is enabled to practice its right of death under biopolitical government. I do not have to go as far as arguing that birth-control is homicide—although the campaigns within which citizens of underdeveloped countries were paid for permanent sterilization could be hardly called humane either[60]—in order to maintain that contemporary biopower practices the right of death; especially if I stick to formulate this right as that of letting die. Quoting Foucault's related sentences will certainly clarify the sense in which the right of killing should be understood here:

> When I say "killing", I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on (Foucault 2003, 256).

One of my aims with this chapter can be read as an attempt to point to the connection of this definition of killing and such Foucauldian claims as the following. (This was his answer to a question whether deciding on the elimination "of the biologically weak individuals" will again be on the political agenda shaped by issues of social security.)[61] "Such choices are being made all the time, even though it is not being admitted. They are made in the logic of a certain rationality and are then justified in various ways" (Foucault 1988, 172).

As a further aim of this chapter, I intended to present the bases on which I believe that "such choices are being made" concerning the hungry people of the parts of the globe

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[60] See Melegh (2006, 66-68).

[61] Robert Bono (interviewer): "Does this mean that we are going to question the automatic use of incubators, consider euthanasia, and go back on the very thing against which social security has struggled, namely a certain way of eliminating the most biologically weak individuals? (…) Who will choose between the constant development of therapeutics, the development of post-natal medicine, and improvements of working conditions…?" (Foucault 1988, 172)

commonly referred to as the Third World. This claim is, in a sense, counter-posed to the Agambenian Camp-as-paradigm thesis, which was said to fail to account for biopolitical practices in its emphasis on the sovereign's right to decide on the state of exception and thus on the bare life of *homo sacer*. In this section, I intended to temper somewhat the contrast of the two conceptions, and show that sovereignty is not eliminated from the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics. However, Foucault's argument, according to which the sovereign right of death practiced through the sword of the law has gradually retreated, still should not be missed; for only with keeping this power-shift in sight can we try to fully understand biopolitical practices and rationalities.

Beyond reformulating killing according to biopower, and so being able to establish the link between the construction of biological threat and the *abandonment* of those resisting to be conducted; and beyond elaborating a concept free from the juridico-philosophical discourse (for example by not tying the death of those let die to a juridical category), Foucault's concept has one more advantage—the ability of distinction. To be exact, not only can the Foucauldian biopolitics account for the difference between those who are made live and those who are let die—while maintaining that both are the objects of biopower—but it can even be said, that by making the broadly understood notion of racism a central element of the concept, it is built on this differentiation.

Finally, although the hungry people of the Third World are usually referred to as whole populations, and so are represented as the victims of the scarcity as scourge, which characterizes disciplinary power in Foucault's concept, I may not be wrong to appropriate this representation with the "people"-sense too, as it was defined by Abeille. In the next chapter, I will attempt to illustrate why we should recognize biopower in the government of the populations of the "developing countries" when they are forced to accept conditions of implementing trade liberalization and the reduction of social expenditures.

Chapter 3 – Too much government. The biopolitics of structural adjustment

3.1 Introduction

For decades, those political scientists who have been inspired by the Foucauldian *oeuvre* maintained Foucault's focus, and constrained their studies to the level of the nation state.[62] With regards to biopolitics, their attention was largely directed to the productivity of neo-liberal governance: the production of entrepreneurial identities and de-politicized practices. It was only in the mid-1990s that international relations theory (mostly its post-structuralist schools) started to gradually integrate the concept of biopolitical governance and, consequently, widened its scope.[63] It is this increasingly acknowledged stream of scholarly work that (together with the primary sources of Foucault's concept of governmentality) serve as the theoretical basis for applying the above outlined framework to contemporary world hunger.

To situate my approach more precisely, my understanding of global biopower is closest to that of Michael Dillon and Julian Reid; thus I refer to *global liberal governance* (or global governmentality) as a regime of power which emerged "[i]ntimately allied with the globalization of capital (…) [and] whose founding principle lies in the administration and production of life, rather than in threatening death" (Dillon and Reid 2001, 41). Liberalism

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[62] See for example the following influential volumes: *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentaliy*. Edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism, and Rationalities of Government*. Edited by Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nicholas Rose. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Mitchell Dean. 1999. *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London: Sage Publications.

[63] It was probably Michael Dillon (1995) who first proposed applying the concept of governmentality in the international context. For newer works in the field, see Wendy Larner and William Walters (ed.s). 2004. *Global Governmentality: Governing International Spaces*. New York: Routledge; Richard Warren Perry and Bill Maurer (ed.s). 2003. *Globalization Under Construction: Governmentality, law, and identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. For their review, see: Michael Merlingen. 2006. 'Foucault and World Politics: Promises and Challenges of Extending Governmentality Theory to the European and Beyond'. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 35, no.1:181-196.

here, as in the above chapter, is an art of government; and government is—for me maybe even more importantly than for Dillon and Reid—"the art of exercising power in the form of economy" (Foucault 2007, 95).

The differentiation implied by this emphasis on the economic focus of the liberal art of government already designates the character of my approach in this chapter, in that among the contemporaneously deployed and essentially interrelated apparatuses of governmental power, here I will mainly focus on those which are practiced within the field of intervention created by the emergence of the global economy. Since this field of intervention is by no means separable from those affected by the "liberal way of war" (Dillon and Reid 2001) for instance, this distinction is rather made due to the spatial limits of this thesis.

There is one aspect, nevertheless, from which my assessment of global governmentality intentionally differs from that of the majority of the literature, namely that I attempt to trace the negative pole of (global) biopower. This aim is motivated by my assumption that theorization of global governmentality—being the heir of the nation state oriented governmentality literature—tends to focus only on the productive character of biopower that is, the governmental practices which "make live". Yet, as it was discussed in the previous chapter, in order for governmentality to function, it first has to divide the "living into the domain of value and utility" (Foucault 1990, 144). This entails the exclusion, oppression, and normalization of those deemed to lack value and utility; and ultimately, to disallowing their lives to the point if death.

Therefore, in this chapter I will assess the global liberal governmental practices derived from what is commonly referred to as the *Washington Consensus*[64] by examining the discourse of the Consensus and of the policies it gave rise to. I will argue that there are certain gaps in this discourse, certain *absent agendas and objects of concern* (Stenson and Watt 1999),

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[64] The term Washington Consensus was originally coined by economist John Williamson (1990); referring to the set of policies he considered necessary for economic stabilization of indebted countries.

and that it is by mapping these gaps that the operation of biopower's negative pole can also be located. I will show that these gaps are intrinsic to the rationality of the neoclassical economic thought that grounds the Consensus not so much by analyzing the actual theory, but by pointing to its similarities with the physiocratic thought described by Foucault; so linking my argument back to the previous discussion on governmentality.

3.2 Economy and population unbound

In the previous chapter I reconstructed Foucault's description of the shift in power technologies which took place when the scarcity avoidance imperative of the disciplinary power-system had been replaced by the apparatuses of security that are motivated by the principle of "letting things follow their course" (Foucault 2007, 48). As it was noted, while both technologies primarily sought to prevent the riot of the towns, the former operated through a number of regulations and prohibitions all aimed at maintaining grain at a low price so that wages can be kept on an accordingly low level. The newly emerging governmental power on the other hand—availing on the physiocratic doctrine—strove for creating an environment where processes of grain production and the market are allowed to develop in their "naturalness" without any intervention. Consequently, this meant permitting the evolution of sudden price increases and scarcity based on the conviction that their processes unbound, production and market will adjust themselves and the threat of scarcity will gradually be cancelled out.

The impacts of this shift on perceiving scarcity have also been touched upon above, with particular emphasis on the break that occurred in this perception. I presented this point as one crucial for biopolitics because it is here that the level of the population emerges as the target for technologies of power. As the domain to be regulated, this level is divided from that of the multiplicity of individuals and it is this level that will be pertinent for governmental

power; lower levels will not be pertinent or will only be instrumentally so. Whereas population was a major factor already for the governmentality of the police state in the seventeenth century; for the governmentality of the *économistes*, population is considered as a domain to which naturalness is just as intrinsic as to production and trade.[65] It is this "set of natural phenomena"—characterized by its specific transformations, movements and the series of interactions taking place within it—that the state starts to take responsibility for in the eighteenth century (Foucault 2007, 352).

As I will argue below, global governmental power assumes the same notions of population and economy. Representing a major means of global governmentality, the policies of the Washington Consensus rest on the same assumptions and consequently, their objectives (e.g. debt repayment and global economic integration) are sought through the management of the processes of these two domains of reality. The main implication of this feature is that the break between the pertinent and the non-pertinent levels is present here too. Since the goals to be achieved concern the level of the population, processes of the lower levels are not accounted for by the rationality of global economic adjustment.[66]

Beyond the targeted domains, the program for economic stabilization of the developing countries can be understood as governmentality proper, for it endorses another common feature of all liberal governmentalities: the constant fear of *governing too much*. Originating in the construction of economy and population as natural sets of phenomena within which production, trade, and interactions within the population adjust themselves so providing for the optimal realization of private interests; liberal arts of government are always concerned with the optimal extent of state intervention. As a critique of both the police state

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[65] "Population will be characterized by the law of the mechanics of interests. In the naturalness of the population and the law of the composition of interests within the population you see the appearance of the population as a reality that has a natural density and thickness that is different from the set of subjects who were subject to the sovereign and the intervention of police…" (Foucault 2007, 352).

[66] Dean (2002, 119) defines the sense of rationality generally adopted in studies of governmentality as follows: "Rationality is not used here in the normative sense, as in the Frankfurt School, i.e. as an ideal of Reason. It is used to refer to how we actually reason…".

(which aimed at optimizing the biopolitical necessities *of each and of all*) and of sovereign

power (as the territory-based deductive power over its subjects aiming to preserve the

legitimacy to rule), liberalism always suspects excessive government because

> [T]he imperatives of bio-political norms that lead to the creation of a coordinated and centralized administration of life need to be weighed against the norms of economic processes and the norms derived from the democratization of the sovereign subject of right. This is why, for liberalism, the problem will be not the rejection of biopolitical regulation but a way of managing it (Dean 1999, 101).

It is this liberal governmental rationality that is endorsed by global governmentality and that

can so be recognized in its practices, among them the imposition of policies for economic

adjustment. It is this rationality, then, the gaps of which I aim to locate through analyzing the

official discourse of structural adjustment.

By choosing to employ discourse analysis, I follow an acknowledged method of the

governmentality literature, which (evidently) derives its practices from the Foucauldian mode

of analysis.[67] Discourses in the Foucauldian method are understood as systems of texts,

practices, and contexts that "create their own 'regimes of truth', the acceptable formulation of

the problems and also solutions to those problems". Beyond creating agendas and objects of

concern, they also create the negatives of these in the form of "absent agendas, agents, objects

of concerns and counter-narratives, which are mobilized out of the discursive picture"

(Stenson and Watt 1999, 192). These out-mobilized objects will be aimed at in the following

analysis of the discourse of structural adjustment.

The set of texts I have chosen to examine as primary sources comprise writings of

John Williamson (the economist who coined the term Washington Consensus), articles

published in *Finance and Development* (the official journal of the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) and the World Bank), and scientific publications or guidelines concerning the

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[67] See "Politics and the Study of Discourse" and "Questions of Method" by Foucault in *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality*, ed. Burchell, Graham, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

structural adjustment programs. Generally, all these texts appeared during the decade between 1980 and 1990, however, of Williamson, I included later writings too.

3.3 Economic growth and/or poverty alleviation

In line with the above conceptualization of global liberal governmentality, the discourse of economic adjustment of indebted developing countries can very well be understood as the criticism of a former discourse characterizing the World Bank of the sixties and seventies. Almost all of the texts I examine locate a shift in the policies and the discourse of the World Bank Group (the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association) at the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties. Generally, this shift is attributed to the retirement of World Bank President Robert McNamara, and to the different world economic situation characterizing these years.

According to the narrative provided by the texts, by this time the World Bank had to face not only that the pro-poor programs of the previous two decades did not succeed in substantially improving the lives of the poor, but also that due to the recurrent economic crises of the seventies and the debt crises of the early eighties, the "*world situation*" has changed (Sanford 1988, 257) and the "momentum of the Third World development" was broken (Beckmann 1986, 26). In this new context, the almost philanthropic policies of the past had to be revised. Recalling the times of his presidency, the texts refer to McNamara either (slightly critically) as to the person whose "speeches (1968-1981) closely identified the Bank with poverty" (Beckmann 1986, 26), or (praisefully) to the "most prominent advocate for the poor" (Sanford 1988, 258). Apparently, the retirement of McNamara represents a milestone in the Bank's policies; beyond its significance in its actual time, even retrospectively. That is, the definite turn towards neoclassical economy seems to be well justifiable by the end of the era of the poor's advocate.

However, the main consequence of this shift is that the developmentalist and poverty-targeted lending policies of the previous period are deemed ineffective in general, and inappropriate in the newly emerged situation of crisis. During the former era "[t]he Bank argued that economic growth was essential for the reduction of poverty, but that special efforts were required to raise productivity and income among the poor" (Beckmann 1986, 26). On the contrary, perceiving the pressures brought about by the early eighties, "[t]he Bank turned its attention, urgently, to helping countries cope with the crisis in development" since "[p]rogress against poverty is virtually impossible in countries beset by financial crisis and economic decline…" (Ibid.). Clearly, this account makes explicit the reordering of priorities, although here the reference to "development" somewhat softens the difference.

The major dilemma, nevertheless, which is often thematized in the analyzed texts, is that of anti-poverty versus pro-stability lending policy, the latter being equal to cooperation with the IMF in implementing structural adjustment programs. Interestingly, the same issue of *Finance and Development* in which Beckmann (1986) evaluates the record of "The World Bank and poverty in the 1980s" publishes an article that discusses the new role of the World Bank; a role primarily characterized by greater cooperation between "the Bank" and "the Fund". This latter text completely endorses the imperative of economic stabilization and growth, and subscribes to the opinion that these can only be achieved through adopting structural adjustment programs:

> Indeed, over the past year a clear consensus has emerged within the international financial community that the problems of [the indebted] countries can only be solved through fundamental changes in their economic policies and structures, and that the key to their debt problems is a combination of effective adjustment and a rapid resumption of durable economic growth (Bock and Michalopoulos 1986, 22).

Although this "clear consensus" is not yet that of Williams, the policies implied are almost identical, since both of them rest on the principles of neoclassical economic theory. That is, they argue that correcting previous policy failures of developing country governments

(excessive intervention) and "restarting the engine of growth" can only be achieved by creating an efficient market, eliminating market barriers, and limiting state intervention through privatization, liberalization, and deregulation (Bock and Michalopoulos 1986, 23).

Thus, the texts reveal that the dilemma of the pro-poor versus the pro-stabilization policies was resolved by choosing the latter; the possible criticism being downplayed beforehand with reconstructing the relationship between economic growth and poverty: "economic policy reform and structural adjustment are basic and key elements of a modern anti-poverty program" (Sanford 1988, 258). Indeed, this path seems to be chosen already as early as in 1982, when Lipton and Shakow (19) state that the circumstances of the present "heighten pressures to turn away from balanced development programs where growth and poverty alleviation are pursued together".

While it would be interesting to assess the interpretation of crisis as the construction of a state of economic emergency (or "economic disaster", according to Ronald Reagan),[68] in which there is no alternative to the implementation of the austerity programs, in the next section I will instead discuss certain major gaps of the above outlined neoclassical rationality of structural adjustment.

3.4 "Short-term pain for long-term gain"

One of the major rationalities of the structural adjustment programs is that long-term growth can only be achieved if major reforms are implemented. According to the argument, although this may be difficult, accepting the conditions immediately is still better than postponing the change, for otherwise, even stricter measures might become necessary: "A planned program of adjustment to counter adverse conditions, even when it involves painful reduction in imports, expenditure, and employment, is almost always better for the poor than

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[68] Quoted in Cristina Rojas. 2002. "Governing through the Social". In *Global Governmentality: Governing International Spaces*, ed. Wendy Larner and William Walters. New York: Routledge.

haphazard, forced adjustment" (Beckmann 1986, 29). Resistance is not wise; even though "[g]overnments frequently have difficulty enforcing such discipline, but a departure from this approach leads to the need of more severe adjustment later on" (Bock and Michalopoulos 1986, 24).

Thus, the pain must be endured, for "on the long run" results will justify the suffering. The basic assumption of this argument is—in line with the *économistes'* principles—that the processes of the economy freed of "unsound regulations" will adjust themselves and establish the desired balance. Furthermore, the argument implies that population reacts to the modifications in the domain of economy accordingly, in the same pace. Both of these implications derive from the governmental rationality of the neoclassical school which, just like its physiocrat antecedents, conceives economy and population as two sets of natural phenomena. Consequently, regulations are directed towards the population as a biological domain, while the multiplicity of individuals existing on lower levels is not relevant for them.

This break between the pertinent and the non-pertinent levels is of crucial significance in the context of the structural adjustment programs. It is hardly arguable that the policies prescribed by the IMF target the most general level of the state's economy (macroeconomic structures), the scale of which, evidently, is much larger than what it would allow for considering processes of a domain with any smaller scale than that of the population. Thus, when the imperative of deregulation implies eliminating all subsidies (of food, fuel, fertilizers, etc.), this will necessarily apply for the population as a whole, without consideration of the role of the subsidies in the lives of the different social groups. John Williamson's (1990, 4) "personal view" in his very article introducing the term Washington Consensus is worth considering: "I would add that, for my taste, the hostility toward subsidies tends to be too general". His taste nevertheless, does not seem to undermine the Consensus which views subsidies as "prime candidates for reduction or preferably elimination" (Williamson 1990, 3).

The rationality behind is that the effects of subsidies "extend much beyond their target groups and are an inefficient way of helping the poor" (Balassa et al. 1986, 102). Eliminating them, on the contrary, would allow for larger amount of public savings, so inducing the growth of the private sector. In general, "redirection of public expenditure priorities"—the second policy instrument of the Washington Consensus—is essential for reducing fiscal deficit which, in turn is essential for economic stability and growth.

Two fundamental and trivial gaps emerge in this rationality. One is equivalent to the break between the pertinent level of the population and the non-pertinent level of the multiplicity of individuals. While the former level is targeted by the regulation, it affects both of them; moreover, in substantially different ways. In concrete terms, while redirecting public expenditure may (in theory) foster the desired processes on the general level of regulation, if redirection means eliminating subsidies, reducing real wages, and cutting expenditure on health care and education, that will necessarily affect the people disadvantageously. Considering that the adjustment policies were implemented in indebted developing countries, the proportion of the disadvantaged people will presumably be rather large.

Secondly and interrelatedly, even if the theory is correct and fiscal deficit will decrease due to the redirection of expenditures further resulting in significant economic growth; this will undoubtedly take much longer time than what it takes for the cuts in wages, subsidies, and health expenditure to significantly affect the people in question. Considering now not only the proportion of the poor people in these countries but also the severity of their poverty, it is reasonable to comprehend the effect of the policies as the operation of biopower's negative pole, often equaling to the disallowance of these people's lives.

Interestingly, the difference between the paces of the reaction of the economy and the effects of the policies aiming to induce growth is implied in the famous notion of the "trickle-down" economics. However, beyond picturing this difference in its name, the rationality stays

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unchanged, since the consequences of the distinct paces are not thematized here either. Furthermore, even if induced growth really reaches the poor finally, as the metaphor also reveals, the poor will be reached the latest. Beyond the significance of this implication (to be discussed below), there is one peculiar detail which I would like to mention here.

Namely, when contextualizing his evaluation of the World Bank's activity in the field of poverty, Beckmann (1986, 26) recalls the recognition of the early seventies, according to which

> the benefits of rapid growth in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in relatively little improvement for many of the world's poorest people. Even within some countries that had enjoyed rapid growth in per capita income, few of the benefits had "trickled down" to the poor.

As mentioned above, it was exactly for this reason that the Bank decided to launch special lending projects directly targeted on poverty reduction. Nevertheless, not even a decade later "trickle-down" economics reentered the agenda as the ultimate means of poverty alleviation.[69]

The revival of this rationality, as Beckmann (1986, 28) notes, was definitely related to the "major shift in political orientation that has taken place in the 1980s". Indeed, many developed countries (the donors) experienced a neo-liberal turn, challenging the welfare state and implementing austerity programs. This problematization of institutions of social security should be understood as the proximate context of Foucault's theorization of biopolitics; consider for example his opposition of the "exposed" and the "assured" populations (Foucault 1988, 164). As it was quoted in the previous chapter, Foucault believed that those who cannot or will not endorse the particular way of life that is imposed by the Western systems of social security, will be marginalized by these very systems.

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[69] "If pressed, many of its [the Washington Consensus'] proponents would argue that the best way to help the poor is to make the economy grow" (Stiglitz 2002, 78).

In the context of structural adjustment programs imposed on the developing countries, with the systems of social security being replaced with the hope for the benefits of growth trickling down, marginalization affects first and foremost those who are already in the lowest strata of the population. The benefits of growth, admittedly, will primarily reach those active in the favored private or public investment sectors.

Therefore, Beckmann (1986, 28) is probably not mistaken when he notes that "the political climate of the 1980s dies not favor the poor". Furthermore, Alex de Waal (2003, 51) also seems to be right when claiming that "[t]heoretically, neo-liberalism has affinities with social Darwinism, with the implication that the weak fail (i.e. starve)". Thus, in line with the discussion of the Foucauldian notion of racism in the previous chapter, in the discursive gaps of the structural adjustment programs, biopower's dividing practices and the break between the pertinent and the non-pertinent levels of population concur.

Characteristically, the rationality containing these gaps itself is best circumscribed by a lack, or rather by the negative of the measures taken when in the second half of the 1980s the structural adjustment programs became under severe attack. As the date of publication of the texts mostly quoted above suggest, they were written already as reactions to this wave of criticism; however, they do not refer explicitly to this circumstance.

Moreover, Williamson's (2000, 2002, 2003) different publications and speeches published twenty years later can all be read as episodes of his series of explicit justification (of both himself and the Washington Consensus). However, already his 1990 article introducing the term is defensive, and openly refers to the criticism of the famous UNICEF report that, according to the common narrative, was among the first to accuse the austerity programs of their excessive rigor. Thus, Williamson, in his attempt to establish a baseline against which implementation of structural reforms should be measured through organizing the economic convictions of "Washington" into an applicable set of policy instruments,

already distantiates the Consensus from its previous self. Concerning subsidies, which (as noted above) are not favored in Washington, Williamson claims that

> Education and health, in contrast, are regarded as quintessentially proper objects of government expenditure. They have the character of investment (in human capital) as well as consumption. Moreover, they tend to help the disadvantaged. *This is an objective that fell under a cloud* in the early years of the Reagan administration, but that has recovered its standing of the 1970s ("basic needs") in the late 1980s (Williamson 1990, 3; emphasis added).

In later texts, he refers to the second policy instrument of the Consensus plainly as "redirection of public expenditures toward fields […] such as primary health care, primary education, and infrastructure" (Williamson 2000, 251).

Although the "new" approach signified by this move—an approach which can be read as another global liberal governmental rationality attempting to balance biopolitical needs and the fear of governing too much—would deserve a detailed analysis, due to the spatial and temporal limits of this thesis, in the following few paragraphs I will only mention few of its features which suggest that previous biopolitical practices are reintroduced within it.

When, due to the intensive attacks, the stricture of the adjustment programs could not be maintained any longer, the IMF and the World Bank endorsed the imperative of "adjustment with a human face", and declared its intention to implement policies that are more concerned with the social consequences. This intention was said to be realized by the system of Social Funds; funds for financing various projects with the aim to mitigate the effects of the adjustment, that is, to compensate for the elimination of previous security institutions.

In line with the neo-liberal rationality, the Funds' main operative principle is being "demand-driven". As opposed to the traditional social protection systems that usually work as supply-driven, Social Funds finance programs that are proposed by local agents: NGOs, municipalities, and community organizations (Cornia and Reddy 2001). Being demand-driven naturally implies that in order to receive, one has to ask. However, one who asks is not

necessarily one who is most in need, and so, here again we may find a system which potentially disadvantages the already worse off.[70]

The same can be said about the targeting practices of the Funds, which distinguished the "new poor" from the "old poor" that is, those who became poorer due to the austerity programs (although they did not necessarily fall under the poverty line), and those who were poor already before the "stabilization"; their poverty falling well under the poverty line. Since the former group generally represents those who have lost their jobs due to the adjustment programs, while people in the latter group have been probably unemployed even before the adjustment, they should be provided at least the same extent of social protection. However, since they often cannot be reemployed in the labor-intensive programs designed for dealing with mass unemployment triggered by the adjustment, their problem seems to be unaddressed addressed.

To be sure, in such scattered manner the discourse of the "adjustment with human face" cannot be thoroughly assessed. In the previous few paragraphs I only intended to point to the fact that—in line with its aim to correct but not to completely replace the rationality of structural adjustment programs—this complemented version of adjustment programs similarly produces its absent agendas, and similarly lead to the out-mobilization of certain objects of concern. As in the original version, these lacks signify the operation of the negative pole of biopower, according to which "it may well be that some will die of hunger after all" (Foucault 2007, 42). Overall, by pointing to the gaps in the global biopolitical rationalities of economic austerity programs, in this chapter I only intended to show that even without testing the policies against their measurable empirical impact; only by observing what they thematize and what is left unconcerned by them, one can trace the points where biopower does not make live but lets die.

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[70] This effect has, in fact, been proven; see Cornia and Reddy (2001, 20-22).

Conclusion

In the introduction of this thesis I defined my aim as providing an understanding of biopower which accounts for its negative pole too, however, without linking the concept back to the traditional right of the sovereign. I presented this task as necessary for a more complete understanding of biopolitical practices of contemporary global biopower that is, of the operations of complex regulatory assemblages and security apparatuses aiming to control overall processes of populations; since I argued that current theorization within the fields of political science and international relations theory did not yet explore all the aspects of (global) biopolitics.

Regarding the question of compatibility of the two main biopolitics concepts, I concluded that Agamben's juridico-political approach cannot adequately explain those practices of biopower which are not related to legal acts. Although we must not view biopower as a system of power relations independent of or superior to sovereign power—as this would contradict the Foucauldian notion of the triangle consisting of the constant interaction and interdependence of sovereign, disciplinary, and governmental power practices—we do have to move beyond the juridical framework. On the other hand, I admitted the expressive potency of *homo sacer*, and indeed it seems that what Agamben aims to articulate in the notion of the life that can be killed without committing suicide is not distant from the object of biopower's negative pole. However, as the discussion about the structural adjustment policies showed, dividing the "living into the domain of value and utility" does not happen through a sovereign decision (Foucault 1990, 144).

To control the populations of the Third World, global governmentality rather operates through interrelated forms of knowledge and assemblages of power, through constructing and redefining threats and through apparatuses of security aiming to cancel out these threats. Thus,

affirming Foucault's original account of biopower, its practices seem to be irreducible to law; global biopower does not rule by the law but governs by the norm. This, however, does not imply that violence is alien from biopower. As the example of the population discourse illustrated it in the second chapter, Foucault's idea of the instrumental role of racism is operative in global governmentality. Although Notestein's referred theory of demographic transition might not anymore be part of the mainstream knowledge of current demography; population growth is still represented as a threat to the environment and (increasingly) to economic growth, and is still associated with poor populations of the Third World. Thus, while down to earth racism does not appear on the surface of contemporary population discourse, racism is re-inscribed into it, since birth reduction is represented as characteristic of "developed" regions, high(er) living standards and upper social classes, that is, fruits of progress; while on the other side of the axis "underdeveloped" regions, underclass and high reproduction rate are clustered. Hence, global biopower is invested with the right to wage war on "overpopulation" or, with the same impetus, on poverty or on AIDS; for these, separately or reinforced by each other both threaten the biological life of the pertinent level of the global population. In this context, violence—characteristically taking the form of disallowing life— is disguised or justified. Thus, large scale abortion campaigns are renamed as economic aid[71] and abolishing food subsidies are imposed as essential components of economic stabilization.

Discourses such as that of economic growth seem all pervasive, just like its inherent norms and regulatory mechanisms operated by global governmentality with the rationale of securing the desired circulation of goods (and obstructing the circulation of threats). Whereas the condition of economic growth is represented as opening up the space for the operation of the natural processes of free market, "market failure" can always be represented as a chimera, as the consequence of ill conduct, political instability, non-compliance, etc. Therefore, with

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[71] See Melegh (2006, 66-68).

the blame placed on the subjects/objects of global biopower, be they states, local communities, or unsuccessful entrepreneurs, the possibility of challenging or resisting the norm is undermined and discredited.

Interestingly, the concept of biopolitics seems to be limited in this aspect. When recalling Foucault's account of the marginalizing effect of social security system, it is clear how the assured and the exposed categories take form along the division of those who accept being conducted by this system and those who do not, but unwillingness (resistance) and inability to accept conduct are dealt with in the same way.[72] In fact, it seems, that resistance to governmentality is not theorized or, at least not in an elaborate way; neither by Foucault himself, nor by those inspired by his work.

As it is commonly referred to, Foucault approached resistance as an anthropological universal: "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault 1990, 95). However, this conceptualization, which is also integrated into current Foucauldian literature, is of limited empirical usefulness; since it does not provide for the conceptual tools for analyzing how resistance to global governmentality operates in diverse sites. Nevertheless, it seems that approaching from the perspective of forms of resistance, operations of the negative pole of biopower could be elucidated; for letting die and refusing to be normalized are closely related in the concept. Hence, emerges a possibility for opening up the theory of global biopolitical governance through relating it to the findings of the rich sociological and anthropological corpus of researching resistance. Since in the past decades this research has successfully transcended the state-centered paradigm, combining its insights with those of the global governmentality concept could indeed be productive.[73] So engaging with the gaps of theorizing biopolitics, the critical value of the concept could also be regained.

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[72] See the quotes from Foucault (1988) in section 2.3.
[73] See for example the literature on "everyday" forms of resistance: James C. Scott. 1990. *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press; or Ranajit Guha. 1999. *Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency in colonial India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

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