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ON THE GOVERNMENT OF POPULATION. GENEALOGY AND TOPICAL NOTES*

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SOBRE EL GOBIERNO DE LA POBLACIÓN. GENEALOGÍA Y NOTAS DE ACTUALIDAD

Abstract

The essay focuses on the theme relating to the governance of lives based on the categories developed by Michel Foucault. Starting from the reconstruction of the concept of population, the work highlights the paradigm of governmentality as an effective tool to reflect on the reconfiguration of devices in use by the government during the pandemic. These systems reveal the logical medical power managing bodies through a flexible system of hierarchies.

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Key words

Population, event, risk, biopolitics, bodies.

Resumen

El ensayo se centra en el tema relativo a la gubernamentalidad de las vidas a partir de las categorías desarrolladas por Michel Foucault. Partiendo de la reconstrucción del concepto de población, el trabajo destaca el paradigma de la gubernamentalidad como herramienta eficaz para reflexionar sobre la reconfiguración de los dispositivos utilizados por el gobierno durante la pandemia. Estos sistemas revelan la lógica del poder médico que gestiona los cuerpos a través de un sistema flexible de jerarquías.

Palabras clave

Población, evento, riesgo, biopolítica, cuerpos.

Population/species government

The government of lives first designates a form of modern political rationality, a technique attributable to the field of research opened by Michel Foucault on power relations in whom he describes the emergence, at the height of the second half of the eighteenth century, of a new collective subject and object of government by the State: the population. Already in the course of 1976, *Il faut défendre la société*, Foucault identifies the appearance of a new political technology with respect to sovereignty and discipline, functional to the historical emergency of the population as a concept forged by knowledge and, together, as a social reality produced by public policies for the demographic reorganization of urban spaces during the eighteenth century. Applied to the population, this technique is, therefore, placed on a different plan of action and scale with respect to the repressive power of the law and the individualizing grip of disciplinary devices. It acts not in the direction of man-body, but in the direction of man-species (Foucault, 1976). It addresses, therefore, the set of biological traits that affect human bodies as a species, on the global plane of the mass and not of the individual considered in his particular field of action. Going back over the stages that marked the theme of the reason for government in Foucault's analysis of power, it is possible to find an important reference to the genealogy in question in the essay *La volonté de savoir*. Faced with the sovereign legal paradigm, implying 'the right of death and power over life' (Foucault, 1976, 181), the notion of "bio power" serves here to designate 'a power to make live or let die' (Foucault, 1976, 181), functional to the management of life, whose development, starting from the seventeenth century, is articulated in two complementary mechanisms, connected by a mobile and oscillating bundle of relationships: discipline, "the anatomical-politics of the human body" (Foucault, 1976, 183), oriented to the strengthening of individual attitudes according to a normalizing action applied to human life for social performance, and population bio-politics, aimed at the governance of lives, that is, at the regulation and taking charge of biological processes – birth, morbidity, longevity, sexuality – that globally invest the life of human beings according to state interests (Foucault, 2004). Now, although these analyses already indicate the emergence of specific problems within the government's methodological perspective, it is possible to trace a systematic analysis of the concept and political rationality only during the Collège de France of 1977-1978, *Sécurité, Territoire, population*, in which Foucault opens a new line of research concerning security mechanisms. This is an important break from the model of *Surveiller et punir* and the disciplinary policies of the body described in it: an excess in the articulation of the relationships of disciplinary power that Foucault registers near an "event" (Revel, 2003, 118), involving a new idea of interaction between

society and the State: liberalism. In fact, if the specific trait of the discipline consists in an individualization mechanism, and therefore, in the construction of new, enclosed, artificial spaces – hospitals, prisons, factories, schools - in which docile bodies are identified, supervised and manufactured, to be conformed to the social norm according to an optimal performance model, the specificity of safety technologies consists in the structuring of an environment, that is, in the regulation of an open space, consisting of a set of artificial and natural elements in relation to each other, according to possible events to be normalized by means of a strategic intervention aimed at maximizing the safety factors and minimizing those of risk. This strategic decline in power relations, identified between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in conjunction with the birth of liberalism, does not entail a substitution or succession of technologies, but rather their interaction and functional complementarity. As “two-sided technology” (Foucault, 1976, 183), bio power involves the oscillation between discipline and safety: if the one implies a taking charge that proceeds in the sense of identification, the other proceeds in the sense of massification, since it is not only a question of normalizing the lives of individuals to make their conduct socially useful, but, more radically, of controlling their entire life understood as a process to be managed in relation to the biological functions of individuals taken in charge as a species that interacts in an environment. The same disciplinary procedure for the identification of bodies is therefore complemented and reinforced by biopolitical rationality capable of extending to the social body (Chignola, 2006, 53), as already demonstrated by the police measures identified by Foucault in the health regulations adopted by the States for the management of the plague epidemic at the end of the seventeenth century. These measures provide, in fact, for a proliferation of disciplinary mechanisms, their extension outside the enclosed spaces for which they have been prepared: the surveillance technique, a panoptic principle of discipline of the bodies identified in the confinement and internment spaces, is combined with the social device of ‘quarantine’, public control of the population throughout the territory of the plagued city, described by Foucault as the “utopia of the city perfectly governed” (Foucault, 1975, 200), as it is totally covered by a regime of visibility and controls. Reconnecting, therefore, to the problem of government as a specific rationality articulated by security mechanisms in relation to the emerging reality of the population (Pandolfi, 2006, 96), it is necessary to underline a decisive point to which reference was made. And, that is, that the modification suffered by the disciplinary government of the bodies in the direction of the biopolitical government of the populations is determined by the industrial development of capitalism and liberal policies during the eighteenth century (Foucault, 2004). In the face of this change, the objective of state policies can no longer be limited to the guarantee of public order and ‘self-preservation’.

It aims to adapt strategically to events, making the management of the relationship with society more effective, ensuring, that is, the circularity of power within the social body, invested with a new idea of economic production. The political end becomes, therefore, the “management of the forces of the state” (Foucault, 2004, 377), that is, the taking charge of life understood as a set of processes to be managed and valued, through the detection of laws that establish the general causes and the factors of incidence. Precisely by virtue of this insurance requirement, dictated by the need to ensure the optimization of the productive forces within the capitalist apparatus and according to state interests, the government of the population takes shape, defined by Foucault as a “set of living and coexisting beings who have particular biological and pathological traits and, consequently, depend on specific knowledge and techniques” (Foucault, 2004, 377). The reference goes to the social sciences that emerged during the second half of the eighteenth century: demography, statistics, social medicine, public hygiene, political economy. Knowledge involved in reality from which they are conditioned according to a practical provision that places them on a strategic level as techniques capable of objectifying facts and events through criteria of probabilistic calculation and quantitative measurement. For this reason, the population affirms itself as a “biopolitical positivity” (Pandolfi, 2006, 109) - observes Alessandro Pandolfi - and that is, as an epistemic construction deriving from the interaction of knowledge and technologies placed at the crossroads between the natural sciences and the social sciences: a collective subject and, together, an object of power procedurally forged by discourses and practices aimed at the production of a “global effect” (Foucault, 2004, 244), relating to the management of all life as a process of production and reproduction of *bios*. In this passage lies the underlying reason why Foucault writes that “the elaboration of the population - wealth problem (in its different concrete aspects: taxation, hardship, displacement, depopulation, idleness-begging, wandering) constitutes one of the conditions for the formation of political economy” (Foucault, 2004, 375). The stakes connected to the production of this knowledge-power is, in fact, the self-constitution of the population as a subject of economic government, whose productive potential must be governed according to the criteria of statistical forecasting, that is, according to laws that detect the average of the behaviors carried out by individuals as members of the species. Here lays the keystone around which to focus the analysis of security technologies. This operative link pushes Foucault to redefine the ‘security-population-government’ problem (government) and convert it from the historical form of power dating back to medieval treatises into a paradigm of governmentality (*gouvernementalité*): “set of institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics that allow to exercise this specific and very complex form of power that has in the population the main target, in the political economy the

privileged form of knowledge and in the security devices the essential technical tool” (Foucault, 2004, 111). In this case, a strategy of relations articulated by an economic logic of power emerges that, following the affirmation of the reason of State, is arranged as a specific political rationality. To deepen the analysis on governance, it is necessary to focus on the precise meaning that the term ‘population’ assumes in the texts of political economy and demography, against the background of the broader philosophical and political debate of the eighteenth century in which the category experiences a real “discursive explosion” (Paltrinieri, 2014, 46-47). If, in fact, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the concept expresses exclusively a passive, accounting meaning, concerning “the numerable set of inhabitants of a territory” (Paltrinieri, 2014a, 47), from the use made of it in eighteenth-century texts an active, incremental meaning also emerges, connected to the life of the species – of which it is synonymous - and to the dynamics of an action functional to a new exercise of power. The objective of governmental rationality, in fact, is the “propagation of men through reproduction for the general welfare of the human species” (Paltrinieri, 2014a, 47). This is the etymological meaning that the notion assumes in the works of very distant philosophers such as François Quesnay, physiocracy theorist, and Jean Jacques Rousseau. For both, in fact, the population emerges as the ‘proof of good administration’ (Rousseau, 1964), and the index of prosperity of the social body guaranteed by a process that, inscribing itself in the reproductive power of the species, has the ability to adapt to the variables posed by the environment. The increasing number of inhabitants of a territory is therefore not to be considered a random factor of the process at stake, but derives from a management technique that acts on the operating conditions relating to the latter. It acts, that is, on a network of conduct and events internal to population phenomena, starting from the observation of the constants and regularities that regulate their developments according to the different age groups of the groups: the birth rate in relation to the sexes, the mortality and morbidity rate, accidents at work. In the face of the decline in population in Europe since 1750, the result not only of desertification caused by wars, epidemics, famines, but also of the new practices of celibacy and birth control adopted by couples within families, bio politics therefore assumes as its own objective the government of reproduction for the health of generations (Putino, 2011, 15). The objective is to encourage the multiplication and de-individualization of the population taken over as living capital, biological wealth, set of production processes to be managed based on the data provided by statistics, political economy, demography, public hygiene, social medicine (Cheinisse, 1914, 54). In the rationalization of this form of power, the analysis carried out by the physiocrats about the ‘naturalness’ of the population takes on a certain importance, as a phenomenon rooted in the spontaneous normality of

desire and in a physical order - 'a priori' - of economic reproduction: agriculture. The idea of convenience introduced by the physiocracy in the context of reason of state therefore becomes 'the universal' of the discourse transposed by government practices in function of a strengthening of lives for "a mutual adjustment between the increase of the population and the flow of wealth" (Paltrinieri, 2014 b, 349). At the same time, as a complex, heterogeneous historical-discursive reality, subject to geographical, climatic and cultural variables, the population highlights individual conduct that cannot be fully controlled by the sovereign. From its interaction with the environment, in fact, emerge behaviors inhabited by a will that cannot be assimilated to the legal sphere of the state, dictated by the calculation of profit and by the free action of subjects who have desires and interests in economic exchange. If, therefore, governmental rationality is capable of guiding conduct according to a purpose appropriate to the purpose it aims at, it is exercised only in relation to subjects capable of opposing a resistance within the power relations in which they are taken. For this reason, - writes Foucault - "governing means structuring the field of possible action of others" (Foucault, 1982). This means affirming the productivity of power in relation to the effects it mobilizes: recognizing the relationality of relationships of force that, on the one hand, produce tactics, strategies, conditioning, but, at the same time, require the freedom of the subjects to be able to exercise and expand. The government of the population intervenes, therefore, on the productive and reproductive activity of the subjects, disposing itself as a 'conduct of conduct': an indirect action on the choices of women and men who implement, in turn, resistances, techniques, behaviors linked to a sphere of interests and an economy of pleasures unavailable to the governmental care of the state. What emerges as the end and instrument of a new technique, is not the accounting set of the inhabitants of a territory, but a collective subject, inhabited by the positivity of choices, desires, decisions, habits.

Normalize the event: between risk, economy, security

At this point, it is a question of examining the link between power and freedom inherent in the rationality of government, as a relational power that produces effects only in relation to free subjects to act. For this reason, it is necessary to focus on a central step of the governmental perspective, that is, on the procedures for the normalization of events mobilized by security devices for the protection and consumption of individual freedoms. Each government of lives has the goal of "reducing the event. Neutralize the event and the contingency" (Bazzicalupo, 2016, 27). This is how Laura Bazzicalupo

writes in an essay dedicated to the critique of neoliberal bio politics. Functional to an economic, strategic logic, the governmentality normalizes the event in order to make possible only the operating modalities adapted to the context, to the rationality scheme in which it fits - in this case, the current neoliberal regulation scheme of the company - in view of a viable solution. For this reason, the government cancels the transformative potential of *reframing*, the opening of the possible real, and the transformation of meaning resulting from the unexpected break of continuity. In its impact with the resistance and excess of living matter, the governmental system modifies its devices and assumes different strategies precisely to position itself in an adaptive, effective, functional way to the normalization of phenomena, to the control of bodies and of the population. On the one hand, therefore, the government implies a radical historicization of power relations, a constant transformation of practices and knowledge to bend contingency to its objectives. But, at the same time, within a process of constant redefinition of the methods relating to control techniques, the aim of the action (Foucault, 2004) remains unchanged: the assurance of life, according to the Foucault hypothesis of an art of governing traced in the techniques of conduct elaborated by the Christian pastoral for the salvation of men, *omnes et singulatim*. As can be seen from the *Course* of 1977-1978, the Christian pastorate constitutes for Foucault the “embryonic germ of governmentality” (Foucault, 2004, 169), the archaic model of an individualizing, beneficial power, aimed at guiding the conduct of men. In pastoral management, therefore, the ability of individuals to act is not subject to a preventive mechanism of renunciation, - as in the legal domain of sovereignty - but is encouraged, rather, by an insurance relationship of care. In this way, through the reference to the religious semantics of the pastorate, Foucault identifies “the point of crystallization” (Foucault, 2004, 169) of the practices through which government reason is institutionalized as an attribute of sovereign power. Against the background of this genealogy, it is understood, then, why the normalization of the event is the goal of every government of lives. As was recalled at the beginning, with regard to the biopolitical code of governmental rationality, it is a question of ‘letting people live’ rather than ‘letting them live’. And, therefore, it is a question of creating a field of exercise in which the subjects are free to carry out actions compatible with the objectives built by the knowledge that define the historical emergency conditions related to that field. The point of node, then, is the functional relationship that governmentality grafts with the regime of truth: expert knowledge that authorizes the exercise of power and allows managing the production of subjectivity, in a dual movement of capture of knowledge and proliferation of subjectivation. The articulation of this strategic relationship between knowledge and power is consolidated at the height of the second

half of the eighteenth century, with the function of police prepared by the State reason for the exercise of medical knowledge. (Foucault, 1963). In eighteenth-century politics, medicine becomes, in fact, a technique of control and management of the social body, understood not in a metaphorical sense, but as “a complex and multiple materiality that includes, in addition to the bodies of individuals, all the material elements that ensure their life” (Foucault, 1994, 13-27). In the face of the practices of medicalization mobilized by the government to ensure the health of families, - in terms of birth management, childhood, the organization of the relationship between parents and children - Foucault highlights the crucial role taken by medicine in the management of collective life and focuses the political status of medical knowledge, as a functional discourse to the exercise of a pastoral power that has the purpose of taking over the religion and converting sin into disease (Foucault, 1994, 40 -58). The underlying reason that explains the attribution of meaning, the leap of trust - the ‘faith’ - accorded to medical science and its effectiveness, is part of the broader process of social transformation that invests the field of intervention of the State at the height of the second half of the eighteenth century: the guarantee of well-being becomes one of the fundamental objectives of political power and the state of health of the population becomes a matter of government within the “field of macroeconomics” (Foucault, 1994, 13-27) to be managed through public interventions aimed at the hygiene and prophylaxis of bodies against the risk of contagion from infectious diseases. This is made possible by the medical police techniques prepared by the government for the control of epidemics, in particular, for the normalization of an epidemiological event – smallpox – organized and perceived collectively as a global phenomenon, generalizable to the whole population with common behavior measures, thanks to vaccination and inoculation techniques based on a statistical evaluation method based on the preventive risk logic. The purpose of government practices, in this case, is not to eliminate the disease or prevent contact - as in the case of leprosy – but, with the safety device organized around vaccination/inoculation, it is, rather, to take into account “the group of sick and non-illiterate, that is, the entire population, without discontinuity and rupture, to see what is its probable morbidity and mortality coefficient, and what for a given population is normal to expect in terms of disease contagion and consequent death” (Foucault, 2004, 64). Therefore, in the management of this epidemic, healthy subjects of the population to whom the preventive measure of immunization from contagion (Esposito, 2002) is extended in a general way are involved. The configuration of the concept of health changes, based on the biological principle of identity of vital phenomena affirmed by Bichat, according to which the pathological does not indicate a qualitatively different state from the normal, but differs

from it by quantitative variations, for changes in intensity in the action of stimulants essential for maintaining health (Canguilhem, 1966), writes Georges Canguilhem. In prevention medicine that addresses the smallpox epidemic and foreshadows the ‘epidemiology of risk’ that arose in the nineteenth century, medicine and statistics are intertwined to ensure the normalization of the epidemiological phenomenon through the calculation of probabilities, that is, through the analysis of the distribution of cases and the observation of the degree of risk faced by the population groups based on different factors related to age, environment, profession. In the face of this global and quantitative analysis, relating to the different normal contagion curves, “the normalization operation consists in letting these different distributions of normality play among themselves, so that the most unfavorable are brought back to the level of the most favorable” (Foucault, 2004, 65). As Foucault demonstrates with regard to the scarcity – considered by the physiocrats to be functional to the natural order of the economy – even in this case, it is not a question of isolating the phenomenon, but of preventively ensuring its circulation by neutralizing the dangers associated with its contagiousness. What emerges from the Foucault analysis of the medicalization and epidemic management policies is, therefore, a security mechanism that adapts strategically to the economic logic of the government around which the population management practices are structured where the phenomena are observed, separated and calculated through risk (Ewald, 1991) insurance technology. This term refers to a scheme of techno-management rationality – at work not only in epidemiological evaluation – which breaks down and depersonalizes the lives of individuals in data, segments, bands of population behavior “to be probed, regulated, controlled in a sort of administrative counter-activity of the risk that does not know the difference between the investigation plan and the government plan” (Tarizzo, Brusa, 2009, 407). In the wake of Foucault, François Ewald demonstrates, therefore, the progressive centrality of medical knowledge in the process of institutional change that invests the rationality of the State and its discursive regime. In his genealogy of the Age-Providence, Ewald clarifies the role assumed by medicine as a ‘power-knowledge’ (Foucault, 1976, 93) that acts within the mechanisms of reproduction and adaptation of bios to the environment: insurance technology used by the State for the prophylaxis of health risk and, more extensively, for the guarantee of well-being as an “agent of transformation of human life” (Foucault, 1976, 93) in the field of law, politics, economy. In fact, it is a question of governing life for “all that it produces, including its potential, which must be actualized” (Ewald, 1986, 16). This is where social rights take shape, based on a principle of evaluation structured around the biological value of life as a productive force. With the birth of the Welfare State, in fact, the government of lives is

institutionalized with regard to the protection of health and work, for the recognition of rights previously granted by the State in a paternalistic way as assistance or donation.

Emergency government and care of the municipality

With the outbreak of the pandemic, the government of lives has experienced a radicalization of measures aimed at the management of bodies and populations. The rapid spread of the epidemic on a global scale has caused an unprecedented health emergency for which new control technologies have been deployed together with epidemic risk containment measures dating back to the 14th century (Foucault, 1975). In this context, the paradigm elaborated by Foucault has proved to be the effective tool for reflecting on the reconfiguration of the devices operating in the management of the epidemic, in terms of the medical logic of a power that cures life and rejects death - makes life and lets it die - through a mobile system of hierarchies, classifications, inequalities, selective inclusions, rejections. At the same time, however, the Covid 19 event proved to be irreducible to the government framework, exceeding the risk normalization procedure around which health and safety policies are built. As a global catastrophe, it has opened a crack in the neoliberal governance scenario, causing a trauma in the collective imagination within which it has fallen. This, for several orders of reasons connected to each other. First of all, because it showed the specter of reality regarding the ability to maintain a health system fragmented by neo-liberal policies of dismantling Welfare. With a paradigm shift in the insurance rationality of social policies - from the social form of collective risk to the 'management' of private risk - neoliberal governance has encouraged the generalization of a business model to society as a whole in the name of competitiveness and efficiency. For this reason, the action of the States was no longer directed to the government of the economy for the health of the population, but, rather, it was bent to the government of lives for the taking charge of the economic logic as a new criterion for regulating social relations. Faced with this change that has occurred in the last forty years, the pandemic has shown a generalized picture of impotence from which emerged precisely the failure of the prevention logic for life insurance, in favor of an entrepreneurial technology of risk and a logic of emergency functional to a government action legitimized ex post by the technical opinions of the experts for biopolitical control. For years, in fact, the Italian Ministry of Health had approved a national plan for the organization of a response to an influenza pandemic, which has remained without applications. If, then, - as has been noted - "the global response required the

large-scale implementation of public health measures with rapid identification and isolation of cases and the commitment of the entire community” (Dentico & Missoni, 2021, 180), the outbreak of the pandemic crisis in Italy highlighted the fragmentation of government action in relation to the implementation of the required measures, due to the lack of coordination between the State and the regions and the lack of resources and devices for health service outposts. To this order of causes, as was said, is added another, closely connected to the first. The pandemic has affected us not only because of the common exposure to impotence reinforced by the crisis of governmental care that neo-capitalism has dismantled through privatization, outsourcing, the individualization of productive forces, the exploitation of reproductive work. The Coronavirus epidemic has affected the whole of society with the impact of trauma because it has shown the spectrality of reality - the abnormal character of the normality produced by neoliberal governmentality – appearing to us as the symptom of a deeper removal, linked to the denied condition of interdependence on Earth (Pulcini, 2020a, 240). Instead, it is a vital need to be taken care of: to come back to recognize ourselves as interdependent - not only from each other, but from the environment in which we live, in a common world to which we belong as a population/species among others. On the other hand, if due to a global threat of contagion induced by a jump of species - “the virus shows that everything is always involved in the part and that ‘there are no autonomous regions in the empire of nature that are an exception’” (Ronchi, 2020) – recalls Rocco Ronchi quoting Spinoza – then the question of the interdependence between human and nature assumes an ontological value to be re-launched on the political agenda. The point must be clarified, therefore, not only to reaffirm on new institutional criteria the policies of Welfare, starting from the practices of care, mutualism, proximity and cooperation, against the background of an idea of society understood as a whole in solidarity between the parties that neoliberal ideology has demolished in the name of entrepreneurial autonomy. But, in view of a profound re-discussion of social policies - health, urban planning, redistribution of income - the question of the interdependence between the living and of the vital interaction with the environment takes on a broader scope and is attested as a political challenge and thought to the anthropocentric vision of the world on which the capitalist model of development based on colonial exploitation, the predation of ecosystems, the appropriation of the common understood as the relationship between the vital human and the biosphere. Thus Elena Pulcini focuses on the radical nature of this challenge: “This last crucial point, on which I limit myself here to a brief incision on the need to rethink the concept of life in the Anthropocene: no longer only in the sense of bios, individual life, unique and unrepeatably, in which lies the source of freedom and

dignity of the person, but also in the sense of *zoè*, of that life that we share with the entire living world within the natural cycle (...). In other words, it is a conversion from anthropocentrism to ecology, which, to quote Latour again, “is not the name of a party nor of a particular concern, but that of a call to change direction: “Towards the Earth””. Ecology, it is good to specify it, as a perspective that goes beyond environmentalism itself, in which the vision of the environment as the dwelling place of man remains, which must therefore be preserved and cared for the human being” (Pulcini, 2020a, 247). Hence, the need invoked by the philosopher to experiment with practices of relationship and movement that combine the collective need for change and reversal with a “process of self-constitution and transformation” (Pulcini, 2020b, 151). A process of subjectivation to which Foucault gives a precise name - ‘self-care’ (Foucault, 1984, *souci de soi*)- as a transformational experience of oneself that assumes political force as it is built and experienced through the permanent ability to resist the devices of knowledge-power. Like feminist knowledge that bypasses the devices of sexuality with an unexpected shift of subjectivity, through the positioning of a subjective truth exercised ‘from itself’. It is clear that this is an internal challenge to a field of struggles, full of pitfalls and ambivalences. In the current government dictated by the health emergency, the geopolitical party for the global vaccine market - between monopoly of distribution of the States and control of patents by the pharmaceutical industries - has led to a radicalization of the logic of neoliberal governance. As an immunization device, the vaccine becomes an instrument of power and body management with a view to a global vaccination against Covid 19. The care of the municipality therefore presents itself as a planetary challenge (Mbembe, Shread, 2021): an unthinkable relational perspective to be put into practice starting from subjectivities capable of taking charge of an imaginative step in the relationship with the common world, beyond a paternalistic vision and biopolitical strategy, to trigger a reversal of the public agenda, regarding the responsibility for the decisions to which politics is called today.

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