

Globethics Repository



Dialectics between liberalism, State paternalism, and biopolitics

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository.
More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy
of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

Item Type	Article
Authors	Schramm, Fermin Roland
Publisher	Conselho Federal de Medicina
Rights	Creative Commons Copyright (CC 2.5)
Download date	2026-07-15 03:48:30
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/238025

Dialectics between liberalism, State paternalism, and biopolitics. The conceptual analysis and the democratic and bioethical implications

Fermin Roland Schramm

Abstract

The political culture of the Western world often opposes liberalism and paternalism, assuming that the first term indicates a defense of the value of individual freedom, constitutive of the human rights culture, while the second would deny this value. This paper defends the thesis that such terms, as a whole, have a dialectical relationship, because the first would take the place of a thesis and the second of an antithesis, which synthesis would be represented by the moment of biopolitics, which would in turn, constitute a new thesis, in a new dialectical process in which the place of the antithesis would be represented by bioethics, both of which would converge in a new synthesis, represented by the empowering of people, and that is constitutive of democratic societies, or that claim themselves as such.

Key words: Bioethics. Biopolitics. Democracy. Empowerment. Freedom. Paternalism.

Resumo

Dialética entre liberalismo, paternalismo de Estado e biopolítica. Análise conceitual, implicações bioéticas e democráticas

Na cultura política do mundo ocidental costuma-se opor liberalismo e paternalismo, partindo do pressuposto de que o primeiro termo indica uma defesa do valor da liberdade individual, constitutiva da cultura dos direitos humanos, ao passo que o segundo negaria este valor. Este trabalho defende a tese de que tais termos, em seu conjunto, possuem relação de tipo dialético, pois o primeiro ocuparia o lugar de tese e o segundo de antítese, cuja síntese seria representada pelo momento da biopolítica, a qual constituiria, por sua vez, uma nova tese, iniciando novo processo dialético em que o lugar da antítese seria representado pela bioética, sendo que ambas confluiriam para uma nova síntese, representada pelo empoderamento dos cidadãos, constitutivo das sociedades democráticas, ou que se pretendem tais.

Palavras-chave: Bioética. Biopolítica. Democracia. Empoderamento. Liberdade. Paternalismo.

Resumen

Dialéctica entre liberalismo, paternalismo de Estado y biopolítica. Análisis conceptual, implicaciones bioéticas y democráticas

En la cultura política del mundo occidental es costumbre oponer liberalismo y paternalismo, suponiendo que el primer término indica una defensa del valor de la libertad individual, constitutiva de la cultura de los derechos humanos, mientras que el segundo podría negar este valor. En este trabajo se defiende la tesis de que tales términos, en su conjunto, tienen un tipo de relación dialéctica, ya que el primero tendría a ocupar el lugar de una tesis y el segundo aquel de una antítesis, siendo la síntesis representada por la biopolítica, que constituiría, a su vez, una nueva tesis, empezando un nuevo proceso dialéctico, donde el lugar de la antítesis sería representado por la bioética, los cuales confluirían para una nueva síntesis, representada por el empoderamiento de los ciudadanos, y que es un elemento constitutivo de las sociedades democráticas, o que se pretenden como tales.

Palabras-clave: Bioética. Biopolítica. Democracia. Empoderamiento. Libertad. Paternalismo.

PhD rolandschram@yahoo.com.br – Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública/Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Ensp/Fiocruz), Rio de Janeiro/RJ, Brazil.

Correspondence

Av. Augusto Severo, 132, aptº 1.201, Glória CEP 20021-040. Rio de Janeiro/RJ, Brazil.

They declare no conflict of interest.

According to the political and social history of the democracies of the Western world, including Latin America, the terms (a) “liberalism” and (b) “paternalism” refer to ideas, beliefs, ideologies, attitudes and different ways of governing that are seen almost always as contradictory or antinomic (Greek anti, “against” and nomos “law”). The first term would defend the value of individual freedom and the second would deny it, so it would be often identified with the term “conservative”, in opposition to “progressive” liberal.

The thesis argued is that (a) liberalism and (b) paternalism have a dialectical relationship, the first taking place of the thesis and the second taking the antithesis, with the synthesis represented by (c) biopolitics. Biopolitics then constitute a new theory that is part of a new dialectic process in which the antithesis place would be represented by (d) bioethics, both of which would converge into a new synthesis, represented by (e) empowerment (or release) citizens.

Below we initially present this apparent antinomy, conceptually analyzing each term separately and then linking them together dialectically.

Liberalism and paternalism: a conceptual analysis

(a) Liberalism

The term “liberalism” is actually polysemic, but it designates, practically in all of its uses, the centrality accorded, in politics as in morals, the individual, their rights, their freedoms.¹ The term can indicate: 1.) an attitude before political problems, in order to limit the power of the State to protect the freedom of individuals; 2) an economic doctrine favorable to the market; 3) a political philosophy which considers the rights of individuals the foundation of the political link or the ‘social contract’; may even 4) adapt to very different political choices, such as those of North American Democrats, who are considered as left, or the ones come from French liberals, identified as “right”.²

Despite its polysemy, the several uses of the term “liberalism” seem to share a common denominator, the project consists of limiting the powers of the State, and this in the name of so-called culture of human rights, understood essentially as property inherent in man considered individual, not as a member of an association, i.e., as subjective rights. According to this proposition, the “general will” supposedly represented by the sovereign state – which,

when it is self-limited, grants such rights to citizens – *it should never be confused with the universality of individuals who are part of the political community, and therefore there is an irreducible disjunction between freedom and power*, which would impose limits on the State’s efforts, placing the ‘rights’ above the general will.³

Specifically, “liberalism” refers to the type of societies identified as *liberal democracies (...)* where human rights are recognized and, as far as possible, respected, and, anyway, always remembered and defended, and extended bit by bit to everything that is called (...) minorities.⁴ In other words, the sense shared by the various forms of liberalism refers to the centrality attributed to the individual, i.e., the “rights” and “freedoms” of each one, considered as constitutive of citizenship and thus of democracy itself. However, according to the so-called “postmodern condition”, characterized by the crisis of the “big stories” or “end of metanarratives”, and its gradual replacement by *legitimation by performativity* and, in particular, by replacing the *principle of an universal metalanguage by the one of a plurality of formal and axiomatic systems able to argue denotative utterances, such systems [are] described in a universal metalanguage, but not consistent*⁵.

In this context, it seems that nowadays every political actor prefers to define themselves as “liberal” in order not to be associated with ideological metanarratives focused on (supposedly) collective entities as “nation”, “race”, “class”, which resulted in political, social, authoritarian “concentratory” universes (like Nazism and Stalinism). In other words, being “liberal” nowadays seems to imply a political stance that has, above all, a ‘negative’ dimension of anti-totalitarianism: *in an age like ours, the crisis of the ‘big stories’, has almost no actor policy who does not define himself as liberal, such is the fear of being associated with those ideologies which would put the accent not on the individual but on collective identities (...) have created the concentratory universes*⁶.

(b) Paternalism

The term “paternalism” refers to the attitude of *treating others in accordance with what is believed to be their good, subordinating to this possible preferences, expressed or not, of such person*⁷. Politically, “paternalism” is understood as “State paternalism” and serves to indicate *the type of government in which the subjects are facing the rulers as minor children before the pater familias*⁸. But the concept “State paternalism” is inextricably linked to

the concept “power” and it may be understood as *detached instance from the willingness of subjects, not unlike how the power of the father of family does not depend on the will of the children*, because the “paternalism” would seek the welfare of the citizens, but without taking into account their participation, and keeping a fraction [of] *citizens in the condition of political minors*⁹.

Importantly, however, that State paternalism should not be confused with the state of social welfare (welfare state), which – according to the Manifesto in defense of civilization – *cannot be interpreted as a mere reform of capitalism, but as a major economic, social and political transformation* [and as] *emergency of a state that institutionalized the ethic of solidarity in which the welfare of one is possible only when others around them are in the same situation and freedom is only possible with equality and respect for others because an individual's autonomy means freedom to feel fulfilled*¹⁰.

If we compare the two terms and their meanings, it can be observed that “liberalism” and “paternalism” refer to content and practices that can be seen as *prima facie* “antinomical” since liberalism assigns a particular value (or “central”) to the individual and paternalism does not. It seems, therefore, that the two terms denote irreconcilable positions, apparently “antinomic”, with regard to individual freedom and their pursuit.

However, all antinomy that is not really a paradox of pure reason (as is the case of the third antinomy of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, which addresses the contradiction between the thesis of the need for a free cause and the antithesis of all that is infinitely concerned conditioned, i.e., the thesis of the need for freedom and the antithesis of its impossibility) which leads to a logically impossible conclusion, from an apparently correct statement, but in fact paradoxical, can be entered in a dynamic process, called as “dialectic”.

This is exactly the case of our approach and it will be understood as confrontation between contrasting ideas and opinions, to try to show how the dialectic does not only indicate a formal construct to try “rationally” to handle the contradictions represented by the antinomies – as intended by Kant, who he considered the time when the intellect becomes reason capable to handle the contradictory theses represented by antinomies that the reason lies in their paths –, but also a device that refers to the structure of reality as showed, for instance, by Karl Marx when he describes the capital as a place of contradictions between the productive forces in the

productive relationships manifested in the conflict between social classes (bourgeoisie and proletariat).

In this case – as Hegel formally wanted to say, who conceived dialectics as a moment of political critique of liberal rationalism because this would hide the internal contradiction between private individual and political logic supposedly universal – the conflict between thesis and antithesis can be overcome by a synthesis that at the same time it preserves the conflict, it tries to overcome it. In short, the opposition between thesis and antithesis can result in a synthesis understood as a process that reconciles a thesis and an antithesis¹¹.

In our case, the place of the thesis is occupied by the content represented by terms liberalism and neoliberalism, and the antithesis indicated by those through the term paternalism, both of which may give rise to a “synthesis”, as can be that shown by the third word in the title: (c) “biopolitics”, whose contents and practices seem to override the contradiction between “liberalism” and “paternalism” because they are, in principle, capable of dialectically include themselves, since the control devices of biopolitics can, for instance, be very well internalized by the recipients themselves, because they may consider them necessary to meet their specific needs and deficiencies.

Thus, in this dialectical process in which there is an almost infinite confrontation between instituted moments (thesis) and instituting moments (antithesis), the synthesis represented by biopolitics (and its concrete devices of biopower) can also be seen as the time to start a new dialectic process represented by the emergence of a new thesis, which can be seen as the actual implementation of the power mechanisms (called biopower) on the lifetime (human or not), in other words, the time at which the biological life enter (and interferes) political phenomena and must deal with the conflicts involved; whose antithesis can be formed by (d) “bioethics”, understood as a questioning and criticism moment, but also of resistance to biopolitics and its biological reductionism of policy to biologic data, and the interrelationship of these with the economy and management, whose practical synthesis can be thought of as the teleological moment of (e) “empowerment” or “liberation”, understood as an existential result of concrete citizenship, represented by democracy. And this is, in a necessarily different context from that one given by the “State of social malaise” that *under the liberal ideology of markets in the name of efficiency and competition, the ethic of solidarity has been replaced by the ethics of competition or performance*¹⁰.

The dialectics between biopolitics and bioethics

Biopolitics, or – as some prefer – the biopolities can be seen, according to the philology of the term, as the reconfiguration of the relationship between politics and life, referring to the fact that this has become the direct object of the exercise of power, namely, therefore of “biopower” and because of the focus on bodies and their productivity, i.e., about government activity represented by economic logic and management, i.e., the encounter between knowledge and productive population management, individuating the logic and economic praxis the true biopolitical, utilitarian and modern governance, which is driven to success. As synthesized by Michel Foucault: *we must speak of ‘bio-politics’ to describe what makes getting life and its mechanisms in the field of explicit calculations and makes power-knowledge an agent of transformation of human life*¹².

More specifically, that it would be a “nationalization of the biologic”, which can be understood in the double sense of a power exercised, on the one hand, on the individual and his body, and, on the other, about the community, seen as “population”, even as “species”, thus implying as “biopower”, whose role would be to manage, control and discipline bodies, life and death of both individuals and populations and even *Homo sapiens* species. In the author’s words: *It seems to me that one of the fundamental phenomena of the nineteenth century has been [that] power could have taken charge of their lives, in a perspective that we could call as assistance . It is, so to speak, of a seizure of power over man as a living being, a kind of nationalization of the biologic, or at least a tendency towards what might be called the nationalization of the biological (...) something that is no longer an anatomopolitics of the human body, but it may call a ‘biopolitics’ of the human species*¹³.

In this sense, one can defend the argument that biopolitics is *the time to overcome the traditional dichotomy state/society, towards a political economy of life in general*¹⁴, and here may be seen as the “synthesis” between contents of “liberalism” and “paternalism” because it has *non-negligible size of the exercise of power* and because it is seen as a set of *resistances and [the] experiences of free subjectivity or as the dimension where life is stated as imposing countervailing subjectivity based on the productive power*¹⁵.

In other words – as Foucault himself made it clear –, there is a deep bond between liberalism and biopolitics, as the *analysis of biopolitics can be done*

*only when we understand that the general scheme of this governmental reason [that] we call matter of fact, in first the economic truth [in the] government reason, and consequently, if we understand what is at stake in this scheme that is liberalism, which opposes reason of State – or fundamentally changes [it] without questioning its foundations – [i.e.] it is only when we understand what is the liberalism that we can understand what is biopolitics*¹⁶. But biopolitics can be characterized as a synthesis because it also leads to a *rapid conversion of freedoms in needs and rights duties*, giving the individual *new ethical, political and legal obligations in relation to himself and to others [and regarding] which should feel increasingly compelled to respond (...) relying on the new biopolitical power and knowledge*¹⁷.

Indeed, the synthesis of biopolitics can refer to and regroup very different phenomena such as wars to solve problems, forms of terrorism resulting from the impossibility of dialogue, situations of exception state and weakening of legal guarantees for security, or then deprived cases of euthanasia such as those presented by the media and cinema that, thus, make them public¹⁸. Accordingly, very different political phenomena can be subsumed under a single concept apparently referring to biological life, traditionally understood as belonging to the field of biology and life sciences in general, but – as we shall see – it can be seen in the case of human beings and sentient beings in general, as an extensive biology that includes both the life sciences and the humanities (bodies and souls if we want to), inscribing, in this way, biopolitics in a kind of *management of biological life, thanks to a protection and increase program production involving a human production and a taming of the being (...) selecting and rejecting in the inhuman and subhuman, those pathogens that threaten lives or that simply are inadequate*¹⁹.

But, the fact of considering the term “biopolitics” as a possible synthesis of the contents of “liberalism” and its “neoliberal” perspective on the one hand, and “paternalism” on the other, does not exclude the possibility of making such a “synthesis” the beginning of the new dialectical process in which the time of the thesis, represented by biopolitics, we can counteract an antithesis, represented by the know-how of bioethics, which is understood as a normative and critical tool for the analysis and evaluation of morality of human praxis in the field of biomedicine and health, aiming to guide the biopolitical choices.

In particular, in this possible biopolitic-bioethics dialectics, the antithesis, which is represented by

bioethics, can be viewed as a *form of resistance to biopolitic and biopower*; i.e., *an alternative to biopolitics* [that is capable of] *mediating the normative issues involved through biopolitics and biopower*, and this *as the exercise of power against biopower*, that is, *as empowerment of citizens* ²⁰.

Bioethics as a deconstruction of biopolitics

From the critical point of view, bioethics can also be seen as an attempt to *deconstruct* the concept of biopolitics, because the vagueness of this concept allows to associate the term with a broad spectrum of meanings, referring to *phenomena as diverse as public biopolitics, protection and democratic welfare states [and] forms of bio tanatos policy [of] Nazi biocracy*. Therefore, such multiplicity refers to the practical need to *deconstruct biopolitics*, and from this deconstruction, trying to apply the tools of bioethics to detect morality (which includes immorality) of biopolitics and biopower, trying to reconstruct forms of resistance (...) the possible democratic control of service control, represented by the power exercised by biopower and biopolitics ²¹.

In fact, according to Roberto Esposito, the term biopolitics would be marked by clear conceptual vagueness, because apparently crossed by an uncertainty [that] prevents any stable connotation [and] seems to make it not only an instrument but also the object of a harsh philosophical and political confrontation on the setting and the fate of our time ²². Yet this “confusion” seems to be the result of other one, related to the concept itself “life” denoted by the term biopolitics, i.e., the result of indiscernibility from the Greek words *bios* and *zoe*, referring the Latin *vita*, from which derives our word “life”.

This conceptual fuzziness is reflected as a consequence, also in the definition of biopolitics that *no longer refers to the size of the zoe, meaning of life in its simplest biological expression or, at most, to the conjunction line along which the bios emerging on zoe, also naturalized* ²³. Thus, there would be, in essence, a “double indiscernibility” in the concept of *biopolitics*, resulted from the fact of this being *inhabited by a term that does not suit it –*, and that even it risks itself *distorting its most striking features, because the zoe definition is problematic because of referring to a conception of an absolutely natural life (...) stripped of any formal connotation*, which would be inconceivable in essence, even more so nowadays, when the human body appears more challenged, and even literally traversed by the technique ²³.

In his work of deconstruction, Esposito detects what it is considered *the unthinkable (or rather the repressed) of biopolitics*, but, in fact, would direct it ²⁴. According to the author, that it would be the *immune paradigm* ²⁵, considered as a mechanism underlying to biopolitics itself and that would circumvent the difficulties arising from its conceptual vagueness. In this regard it should be remembered that the *immunity* category, besides being used in public health, is also used by systems theory (Luhmann), sociology (Baudrillard) and by own philosophy (Derrida). In the latter area the concept would tend to move in that one on autoimmunity, *presented as the ultimate horizon of contemporary political and understood as historical category inextricably related to modernity* and to its preoccupation with *self-preservation of life* and social protection against conflict, i.e., with autoimmunization against *its effects dissolution* ²⁵.

Still to Esposito, the immune paradigm (or *immunitas*) *bios and nomos, life and politics*, [are] *the two components of a single, inseparable group that only acquires meaning from the relationship between them*; and that immunity would not be *only the relationship that binds life to power, but the power of preserving life, since unlike anything that presupposes the concept of bio-politics – understood as the result of the meeting that at one point occurs between two component elements – from this point of view there is no external power for life, just as life is not ever out of power relations*. For this reason, in this case, the policy could only be seen as a *possibility, or instrument of preserving life* and immunization as a *negative protection of life* ²⁶.

Indeed, the ambiguity of the concept of *biopolitics* seems to allow us using to indicate different phenomena, such as public *biopolitics* of assistance, protection and welfare of democratic states, and ways to *biotanatopolitics*, as it was the case of Nazi “biopolitics” (or *biocracy*), among others. The two situations in which the same term “dense” – *biopolitics* – seems to become indistinguishable and they must, however, be different because:

- (a) in the first case, biopolitics refers to policies intended to ensure and enhance the health of the population, thanks to the control, management and repair of the human body (the individual) devices and on the human species;
- (b) in the second case, instead of an interface between *bios* and *polis*, we have a subsumption of the *bios* (or *zoe* itself), i.e., the policy subsumed to biology and its laws.

Thus, the concepts of *bios* and *polis* seem to have two types of a possible logic relationship: 1) an inter-relation with no priority of one concept over the other (which linguists call paratactic relation); 2) A subsumption relation from one to another term (which linguists call *hypotaxis*), which, in turn, also has two variants:

- (2a) subsumption from *bios* to *polis*, which corresponds to the type of relationship that existed, for example, to Aristotle;
- (2b) subsumption from *polis* to *bios*, and in turn, from *bios* to *zoe*, as was the *inter alia* case of Nazi biocracy

But despite these logical distinctions, the conceptual amphiboly persists. In fact, the term *biopolitics* is currently found in various discursive contexts in which the “conceptual duo” represented by the words *bios* and *politics*, appears the, i.e., *when, with an increasing frequency, politics deals with problems of life, when, in politics, the body of those who have power and those who support the power becomes the central point*, but keeping a particular semantic mobility, an instability that is proof of the vitality of the term and the requirement [to] find a name/concept [which can] focus on behaviors and relationships that traditional lexicon could no longer capture and guide a number of new phenomena (...) highlighting the vital implication that the old [political] lexicon had hidden²⁷. However, if we admit the possibility of biopolitics be part of a new dialectical process, along with bioethics, understood as its antithesis, which could be, in fact, the relationship between biopolitics (thesis) and bioethics (antithesis)?

One way to relate dialectically biopolitics and bioethics would be to think, for instance, *the problematic use of the term ‘life’ in bioethics and its interfaces with the praxis biopolitics and biopower*²⁸ devices. Particularly, considering that confusion can arise when we consider that *bioethics*, *biopolitics* and *biopower* have a common reference to the *bios* concept, as can be the case when we talk about “ethics of life”, “politics of life” and “power of life”, but we understand, in fact, “ethics on life”, “policy on life” and “power over life”. In fact, in this case, the reference to *bios* does not allow saying if it is always the same sense that we are using, or not.

Indeed, in reference to the term *bios*, made by the duo *biopower/biopolitics*, the first term refers to the effective exercise of power devices about life and the second one to the politics that *biopower* seeks to implement and administer, which is the reason why one could say that this reference to *bios*, tak-

en in the case of biopolitics/biopower, is different from that taken by bioethics, at least if we cannot understand it so much as a descriptive or normative tool of human *praxis* that involves life (as it is indeed too), but practice as a practical form of resistance to *biopolitics* and *biopower* forms or as a moment of exercise of power against biopower; i.e., as empowerment (‘liberation’) of citizens²⁹.

However, in this dialectic, bioethics (understood as a form of resistance to biopolitics and biopower) should not be seen so much as a replacement (or representative) of social control (which is in fact guarantee of democracy) – because that could bring it to some form of paternalism – but as *resistance* tool to the service of this democratic control of this service control tool (represented by the power exercised by biopower and biopolitics) and which is indicated, for example, by other dense word: empowerment (empowerment, liberation...).

However, to say this is still insufficient, since there is no consensus on the relationship between biopolitics and biopower. Indeed, there are those who consider that the duo biopower – biopolitics should be seen as an adversarial relationship biopower/biopolitics. This is the case, for example, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, who consider biopower – represented by the power of the crowd. Biopolitics as opposed to or as a form of resistance³⁰ For Rancière, however, this interpretation of Hardt and Negri should be avoided because it would eventually reassert one vitalistic roots politics.

A seemingly most promising way to tackle such difficulties would change the resistance agent, both as to the biopolitics biopower, identifying, for example, bioethics, understood as a device capable of giving a moral biopolitics content, i.e., able to submit the policy to the moral standards that legitimize it or de-legitimize it, thus taking up the contents as those advocated, for example, the Movement for Ethics in Politics, 1992, in Brazil.

Meanwhile, this “pretense” of bioethics should be able to answer “dialectically” the criticism coming from the field itself, as there are authors who consider that bioethics has become, in recent times, *a discipline at risk* due to *excessive academicism* apparently focused in *individual and irrelevant problems when compared to the major themes as social inequity, public health policies, ecological crisis*, which would indeed being made or attached by biopolitics itself, one should thus prevent its appropriation from other flanks, *unrelated to the specific and pristine agenda of the bioethical thought*³².

Such risks, appointed by bioethicist Michael Kottow certainly exist. However, such a condition of “risk” of bioethics can also be seen as a stimulus to better think a “resistant” bioethics – which would include, for example, an “intervention bioethics [understood as] *an analysis of macro-problems and collective conflicts*”³³ –, but knowing that this is only possible if there is the previous theoretical deconstruction of the categories of biopolitics and biopower, and ethical and political opposition to a concrete unjustified annexation of bioethics and biopolitics.

Moreover, among the experts who biopolitics there is also which reverses the relationship, proposed here, between biopolitics and bioethics, considering the term biopolitics *as definable per differentiam regarding bioethics, since biopolitics analysis critically illuminates the exercise of this power in those moral and legal devices which legitimize and organize the normative action on life*³⁴. debate about the relationship between bioethics and biopolitics, therefore, remains open.

Final considerations

What can we provisionally conclude from this deconstruction of dense and ambiguous category of biopolitics? Would it be this entry into the political field of biological life? And how about this form of resistance represented by bioethics?

The answer is not simple considering that biopolitics “*not part of a philosophical assumption [but] concrete events*”³⁵ (as was the paradigmatic case of Nazi biocracy) and that this arrival on the scene of life (in its dual dimension bios and zoe) seems to defy our political categories, based historically on

the separation zoe/bios and lexical priority of the bios about zoe.

But even according to Esposito, this would be precisely *the strength of biopolitical perspective, its ability to read this tangle and this conflict, this displacement and this implication*³⁶, which should, however, know that *biological life of individuals and population [settled a long time] at the center of all major policy decisions, and we would need a paradigm shift, since the model of medical cure has become not only the privileged object, but the very form of political life, that is, a policy that meets the sole source of legitimacy only possible in life*³⁷.

Under these conditions, what then would be the role of bioethics biopolitics? One way to answer would be to say that bioethics would be a “liberating” alternative front biopolitics, therefore in principle could mediate the normative issues involved in the relationships that are established between bios and zoe, and between them and the polis.

However, another question arises: what is the legitimacy of bioethics to do this? One possible answer – as we have seen – is that such legitimacy would be given resisting biopolitics reduce political, and, conceptually, to the subsumption of bios to zoe. Or perhaps using the tool desecration of the so called ‘inevitable’ natural established between biology and politics by biopolitical paradigm, understanding the desecration as an offset without abolition of what you want to go, the power devices, and restoring the use common spaces that [power] had confiscated³⁸. These seem to be the contents of the dialectic between biopolitics and bioethics, we try to outline here, whose synthesis can be empowering people in a kind of society that we can call, so democratic.

References

1. Cofrancesco D. Liberalismo. In: Esposito R, Galli C, organizadores. Enciclopedia del pensiero político. Bari: Laterza; 2005. p. 464-7.
2. Raynaud P. Libéralisme. In: Mesure S, Savidan P, organizadores. Dictionnaire des sciences humaines. Paris: PUF; 2006. p. 690-2.
3. Raynaud P. Op. cit. p. 691.
4. Lyotard JF. Moralités postmodernes. Paris: Galilée; 1999. p. 108.
5. Lyotard JF. La condition postmoderne. Paris: Ed. de Minuit; 1979. p. 72.
6. Cofrancesco D. Op. cit. p. 464.
7. Nilstun T. Paternalismo. In: Hottois G, Missa JN, organizadores. Nova enciclopédia da bioética. Lisboa: Piaget; 2003. p. 518-20.
8. Ornaghi L. Paternalismo. Enciclopedia filosofica. Milano: Bompiani; 2006. v. 9. p. 8.385-7.
9. Berardi R. Paternalismo. Op. cit. 2006. v. 9. p. 8.386-7.
10. Abaixo-assinado Manifesto em Defesa da Civilização. Petição Pública Brasil. [Internet]. (acesso 19 fev. 2014). Disponível: <http://www.peticaopublica.com.br/PeticaoVer.aspx?pi=P2012N30206>
11. Blackburn S. Dicionário Oxford de filosofia. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar; 1997. p. 363.

12. Foucault M. Histoire de la sexualité: la volonté de savoir. Paris: Gallimard; 1976. v. 1. p. 188.
13. Foucault M. Il faut défendre la société. Paris: Gallimard; 1997. p. 213-6.
14. Revel J. Biopolitique. Dictionnaire Foucault. Paris: Ellipses; 2008. p. 26.
15. Marzocca O. Biopolítica. In: Vittorio P, Marzocca O, Romano O, Russo A, Simone A, organizadores. Lessico di biopolítica. Roma: Manifestolibri; 2006. p. 50-6.
16. Foucault M. Naissance de la biopolitique. Paris: Gallimard; 2004. p. 24.
17. Marzocca O. Op. cit. p. 53-6.
18. Bazzicalupo L. Biopolítica: una mappa concettuale. Roma: Carocci; 2010. p. 137.
19. Bazzicalupo L. Op. cit. p. 20.
20. Schramm FR. A bioética como forma de resistência à biopolítica e ao biopoder. Rev. bioét. [Internet]. 2010 (acesso 19 fev. 2014);18(3):519-35. Disponível: http://revistabioetica.cfm.org.br/index.php/revista_bioetica/article/view/583/588
21. Schramm FR. Op. cit. p. 528-9.
22. Esposito R. Bios: biopolítica e filosofia. Lisboa: Ed. 70; 2010. p. 30.
23. Esposito R. Op. cit. p. 31.
24. Campbell T. Política, immunità, vita: il pensiero di Roberto Esposito nel dibattito filosofico contemporaneo. In: Esposito R. Termini della politica: comunità, immunità, biopolítica. Milano: Mimesis; 2008. p. 9-61.
25. Campbell T. Op. cit. p. 15-6.
26. Esposito R. Op. cit. 2010. p. 74.
27. Bazzicalupo L. Op. cit. p. 13.
28. Schramm FR. O uso problemático do conceito 'vida' em bioética e suas interfaces com a práxis biopolítica e os dispositivos de biopoder. Rev. bioét. (Impr.). 2009;17(3):377-89.
29. Schramm FR. Op. cit. 2009. p. 384.
30. Hardt M, Negri A. Impero. Il nuovo ordine della globalizzazione. Milano: Rizzoli; 2002.
31. Ranciere J. Biopolitique ou politique? Multitudes. [Internet]. 2000 (acesso fev. 2014);1:88-93. Disponível: http://multitudes.samizdat.net/article.php?id_article=210
32. Kottow M. Bioética: una disciplina en riesgo. Revista Redbioética. 2010;1(1):158-72.
33. Garrafa V, Porto D. Bioética de intervención. In: Tealdi JC, organizador. Diccionario latinoamericano de bioética. Bogotá: Unesco; 2008. p. 161-4.
34. Bazzicalupo L. Op. cit. p. 21.
35. Esposito R. Totalitarismo o biopolítica: per una interpretazione filosofica del Novecento. In: _____. Termini della politica: comunità, immunità, biopolítica. Milano: Mimesis; 2008. p. 159-81.
36. Esposito R. Op. cit. 2008. p. 176.
37. Esposito R. Op. cit. 2008. p. 179.
38. Agamben G. Profanations. Paris: Payot & Rivages; 2005. p. 97.

