Università
Ca'Foscari
Venezia

Master's Degree programme – Second Cycle (D.M. 270/2004)

in Relazioni Internazionali Comparate - International Relations

Final Thesis

At the Core of Neoliberalism

A Critical Account of the Major Theories of Neoliberalism and an Analysis of the Neoliberal Subjectivity

Ca' Foscari
Dorsoduro 3246
30123 Venezia

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Giorgio Brianese

Co-Supervisor

Ch. Prof.ssa Francesca Coin

Graduand

Leonardo Uscotti

Matriculation Number 833068

Academic Year

2014 / 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

Starting from the banal observation that the optimistic promises of our globalized neoliberal society clash with the undeniable truth of rampant economic inequality, poverty, anxiety and insecurity; and from the fact that few individuals manage to "success" in the ruthless and all-embracing mechanisms of competition and workfare of enterprises, I investigate what exactly is meant by "neoliberalism".

Thus, in the first part of this dissertation, I identify and examine the most important theories and interpretations of neoliberalism. I acknowledge that the neo-Marxist and the neo-Foucauldian accounts are the most relevant interpretations of neoliberalism; yet I argue that they are not entirely compatible with each other. I underline some of the limits of neo-Marxist accounts and show how a neo-Foucauldian approach discloses several peculiar points of neoliberalism. In particular, I argue that the Foucauldian analysis of the human capital theory paves the way for one of the most effective critique of neoliberalism today.

In the second part, adopting a neo-Foucauldian perspective, I focus on the anthropology of human capital, Human Resource Management practices, Personal Enterprise as a contemporary form of wisdom and, more generally, on the production of neoliberal subjectivities.

Finally, in the third part, I acknowledge that the analyses I carried out in the second part of my dissertation, focused on the "microphysics" side of power and bottom-up mechanisms, need to maintain a link with the "bigger picture", that is to say, with the macro-level of institutions, classes and societies. To conclude, I attempt a dialogue between Gramsci and Foucault, in order to explore the possibility of a theory of social transformation through a notion of resistance which draws from both authors.

Summary (Italian)

La tesi è suddivisa in tre macro-sezioni: teorie del neoliberalismo, soggettività neoliberale e prospettive di ricerca.

Nella prima sezione si studiano i principali usi del termine "neoliberalismo", associando i vari significati identificati alle rispettive teorie. Il termine "neoliberalismo" può riferirsi a una varietà consistente di significati, tanto che il suo utilizzo risulta impossibile senza una precisazione circa il suo uso. Il punto di partenza per sviluppare una tassonomia è la classificazione sviluppata dal sociologo Terry Flew nell'articolo *Six Theories Of Neoliberalism*. Dopo aver appurato che l'utilizzo del termine "neoliberalismo" diventa corrente a partire dagli anni 2000, vengono identificate cinque teorie del neoliberalismo da approfondire:

1. Neoliberalismo come categoria critica generica;
2. Neoliberalismo come unica agenda plausibile in materia di politica economica;
3. Neoliberalismo come politica economica specifica dei Paesi anglofoni;
4. Neoliberalismo come ideologia economica dominante del capitalismo globale;
5. Neoliberalismo come nuova forma di governamentalità.

Nel primo significato, ci si riferisce al termine neoliberalismo come categoria di "denuncia multiuso". Alcuni studiosi, talvolta abusando del termine, trattano il neoliberalismo come un fenomeno che si manifesta in qualsiasi processo politico, economico, sociale o culturale della società capitalistica contemporanea. Il rischio è quello che il termine diventi una sorta di "stretta di mano segreta" tra accademici o giornalisti che hanno simpatie di sinistra. Anche per questo motivo, il termine neoliberalismo è arrivato a significare una forma di

fondamentalismo di mercato a cui nessuno vuole più essere associato. Essendo utilizzato in ogni sorta di contesto, dai *reality show* alle riforme dell'università, senza un'adeguata spiegazione teorica, il termine rischia di perdere ogni valenza esplicativa e critica. Nel peggiore dei casi, come argomenta il sociologo Bruno Latour, si rischia di produrre qualcosa di simile a delle teorie cospiratorie.

Il secondo utilizzo si riferisce al termine neoliberalismo per indicare "come stanno le cose". Il famoso slogan di Margaret Thatcher recitava infatti "*there is no alternative*", a segnalare l'inevitabilità del liberalismo economico e del libero mercato, dopo la disfatta del socialismo reale e la crisi della macroeconomia keynesiana. La stessa Thatcher indicò come la sua più grande vittoria fosse quella di aver convinto i rivali di "centro-sinistra", e in particolare il *New Labour* di Tony Blair, ad adottare la sua stessa agenda in materia di politica economica. La "terza via" di Blair consisteva infatti nell'implementare un progetto neoliberale: approccio manageriale, liberalizzazione dell'economia, e limitazione della sfera sociale. Similmente, Bill Clinton annunciava nel 1992 la fine dello stato sociale come precedentemente conosciuto. Il rischio, presente anche oggi, è quello di non riuscire più a immaginare alternative plausibili poiché, nonostante le politiche neoliberali non godano sempre di una buona reputazione, sono più radicate che mai nelle menti dell'*élite* dirigente e dei responsabili decisionali (*line managers*).

Il terzo utilizzo identifica il neoliberalismo con la dottrina politica ed economica specifica del mondo anglofono. I teorici di questa posizione partono dalla constatazione che esiste una sostanziale diversità istituzionale delle economie capitalistiche. L'economista Bruno Amable identifica cinque modelli di società capitalistica: economia liberale di mercato (modello anglosassone), economia socialdemocratica, capitalismo asiatico, capitalismo europeo continentale, e capitalismo del sud Europa. In particolare, Amable sottolinea come i paesi del modello anglosassone (Stati Uniti, Gran Bretagna, Canada e Australia) emergano come un gruppo omogeneo di mercati finanziari e del lavoro

flessibili, contrapposto al blocco mediterraneo (Italia, Spagna, Portogallo e Grecia) di mercati rigidi. Da questa prospettiva, è possibile avanzare analisi e critiche delle agende politiche neoliberali specifiche di alcune aree geografico-culturali, e del modello liberale anglosassone in particolare. Tuttavia, questo modello critico-esplicativo viene generalmente scartato a favore delle più diffuse teorizzazioni di stampo neo-Marxista che descrivono il neoliberalismo come l'ideologia dominante del capitalismo globale contemporaneo.

Il quarto modo di intendere il neoliberalismo è quello di stampo neo-Marxista. Secondo la definizione di Ge´rard Dume´nil e Dominique Le´vy, *il neoliberalismo è la nuova fase del capitalismo che emerge sulla scia delle crisi strutturali degli anni Settanta*; esplicita la strategia della classe capitalista, in alleanza con la dirigenza (*upper management*), e in particolare con i *manager* della finanza, di rafforzare la loro egemonia e di espanderla a livello globale.

Naomi Klain argomenta nel suo *The Shock Doctrine* che le politiche neoliberali, come formulate dall'economista della Chicago School Milton Friedman, furono implementate a partire dal 1975 in Chile dal dittatore Augusto Pinochet con ampio ricorso alla violenza. Successivamente, con il supporto di Stati Uniti e altri Paesi capitalisti, questa dottrina economico-politica fu imposta ad Argentina, Indonesia e altri Paesi. Klain elabora la nozione di "capitalismo dei disastri" per indicare come i governi si servano opportunamente di catastrofi (disastri naturali e guerre) per rimodellare lo stato e imporre il libero mercato.

Una lettura neo-Marxista più ortodossa del neoliberalismo è quella presentata da David Harvey nel suo *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Questi definisce il neoliberalismo come una teoria basata su pratiche politico-economiche volte ad aumentare il benessere umano favorendo le capacità e le libertà imprenditoriali degli individui, all'interno di un quadro istituzionale caratterizzato da diritti di proprietà privata inviolabili, libero mercato e libero scambio. Harvey argomenta che, a partire dal 1970, lo sviluppo del neoliberalismo fu caratterizzato da una serie di crisi e da un'estensione geografica

irregolare. In particolare, la differenza geografica nello sviluppo economico di territori in competizione favorì il progresso del neoliberalismo a livello globale. Un obiettivo fondamentale del processo di neoliberalizzazione consisteva nel ripristinare potere di classe all'*élite*. Questo progetto iniziò negli anni Ottanta e si rafforzò durante gli anni Novanta, specialmente nei Paesi dove fu possibile una finanziarizzazione dell'economia e una mobilità geografica del capitale. L'attività di Wall Street, del Fondo Monetario Internazionale (FMI) e del dipartimento del Tesoro, durante gli anni dell'amministrazione Clinton (1993-2001), forzò i Paesi in via di sviluppo ad adottare delle politiche neoliberali; ciò soprattutto grazie ai programmi di adeguamento strutturale amministrati dal FMI. Entro il 1982, le politiche economiche di stampo keynesiano furono espulse dalle politiche del FMI e della Banca Mondiale. Durante gli anni Novanta, ci si riferiva al *Washinton Consensus* per indicare il solo quadro programmatico adeguato per affrontare i problemi dello sviluppo economico dei Paesi del "Sud"; a questi era richiesto di adempiere a condizioni precise in cambio di prestiti urgenti e di programmi di ristrutturazione del debito. Un altro elemento del processo di neoliberalizzazione sono le crisi finanziarie, definite da Harvey come "endemiche e contagiose", come la crisi del debito messicano nel 1982, la crisi della Tequila del 1995, e la crisi asiatica iniziata nel 1997 in Tailandia.

Nelle letture neo-Marxiste il neoliberalismo emerge come una serie di soluzioni, basate sul mercato, per risolvere nuovi problemi economici. L'economia keynesiana aveva dominato le istituzioni economiche, imponendosi come modello standard dagli anni Trenta agli anni Settanta; tuttavia, il paradigma cominciò a vacillare con l'emergenza di nuovi problemi, come la simultanea inflazione dei prezzi e la disoccupazione crescente, legati alla crisi petrolifera e alla recessione del 1973-75. Nuove idee per affrontare nuovi problemi, come quelle elaborate in precedenza dagli economisti austriaci Ludwig von Mises e Friedrich von Hayek, trovarono così fortuna.

Le narrazioni neo-Marxiste come quella di Harvey si possono definire "teorie dell'ideologia dominante": descrivono l'ascesa dell'egemonia neoliberale a opera di una classe dominante rinascente, la quale riesce a imporre la propria ideologia economica attraverso il controllo di istituzioni culturali, statali e private. Ci sono, tuttavia, alcuni *problemi* associati a questo genere di teorie: per esempio, Donald Nonini critica il loro *funzionalismo*; Patrick Dunleavy e Brendan O'Leary, invece, criticano il loro *strumentalismo*.

Un altro problema fondamentale delle interpretazioni neo-Marxiste del neoliberalismo è che intendono questo fenomeno fondamentalmente in termini di ideologia economica. Così facendo, come argomentano Pierre Dardot e Christian Laval, *non riescono sempre a cogliere la peculiarità del neoliberalismo*, il quale impiega delle tecniche di potere senza precedenti sui comportamenti e sulle soggettività. Alcuni studiosi, tra i quali la filosofa Wendy Brown, hanno tentato di colmare questa lacuna introducendo delle idee di Foucault all'interno di una narrazione neo-Marxista del neoliberalismo. Tuttavia, come argomenta Clive Barnett, i due approcci non sono facilmente riconciliabili perché impiegano diversi modelli esplicativi e concettuali, diversi modelli di causalità e determinazione, diversi modelli di relazioni sociali e agenti, e diverse interpretazioni normative del potere politico. In altri termini, *Foucault risulta strumentalizzato*; inoltre, il rischio è quello di adottare una prospettiva foucaultiana servendosi di idee dalle quali lo stesso Foucault si era dissociato in varie occasioni. È dunque necessario, per evitare strumentalizzazioni, tornare ad analizzare le lezioni che Foucault ha dedicato a liberalismo e neoliberalismo.

Il quinto significato di neoliberalismo deriva dunque da Foucault. In particolare, in *The Birth of Biopolitics* il filosofo ne studia due forme, nate da un riesame del liberalismo del tardo diciottesimo secolo: l'*ordoliberalismo tedesco* post-bellico della Scuola di Friburgo, e il più recente *neoliberalismo americano* della Scuola di Chicago. Queste due forme di neoliberalismo condividono alcune caratteristiche: l'economia keynesiana come "nemico" comune, come anche

l'economia centralizzata, la pianificazione e l'interventismo statale nelle proporzioni teorizzate da Keynes; e un quadro teorico comune rappresentato da Ludwig von Mises e Friedrich von Hayek.

Una delle principali differenze tra liberalismo e ordoliberalismo tedesco attiene al modo di intendere le attività economiche: nel liberalismo classico, e in particolare nelle teorie di Adam Smith basate sullo scambio, il mercato veniva *naturalizzato*; nell'ordoliberalismo, al contrario, le attività economiche e le relazioni sociali non sono basate sul mero scambio, bensì sulla *competizione*, la quale non è un dato naturale, ma richiede una vigilanza e un intervento costanti da parte dello stato. Al contrario del socialismo, non vengono più adottate politiche di assistenza dirette all'individuo, bensì vengono massimizzate le possibilità per l'individuo di migliorare la propria condizione economica, riducendo i meccanismi anti-competitivi della società, evitando la centralizzazione, incoraggiando la piccola-media impresa, e favorendo l'accesso alla proprietà privata: è questa la politica sociale tedesca. Due aspetti associati a questa politica sono l'universalizzazione della forma d'impresa e la ridefinizione della sfera giuridica. Tuttavia, questa economia sociale di mercato e i suoi meccanismi competitivi viene accompagnata da quella che Wilhelm Röpke definì in termini di *Vitalpolitik*, per sottolineare che uno stato non può costituirsi in base ai soli meccanismi di mercato, ma deve assumersi la responsabilità morale di dare forma all'ordine sociale.

Il neoliberalismo americano presenta importanti differenze rispetto alla controparte europea. Fin all'inizio, il liberalismo americano non si presenta come una modalità di limitare il ruolo dello stato, ma come il principio stesso di fondazione e legittimazione dello stato. Secondo, il neoliberalismo americano estende la sfera economica invadendo la sfera sociale, ridefinendola in base alla logica del mercato; inoltre, lo stato stesso diventa una sorta di impresa. Infine, vi è un particolare interesse per la *teoria del capitale umano*, sviluppata da Theodore Schultz, Gary Becker e Jacob Mincer. A differenza della politica

economica classica, che si concentra sui meccanismi della domanda e dell'offerta della forza lavoro, questa teoria intende l'individuo come elemento di valore, il quale può essere aumentato tramite l'investimento su di sé. Non si tratta più di un individuo alienato, ma di un investitore, un innovatore, un imprenditore del sé.

La seconda sezione della tesi, sulla soggettività neoliberale, prende le mosse dalla teoria del capitale umano. L'obiettivo manifesto della governamentalità neoliberale è quello di gestire e organizzare la libertà, e dunque ha un significato generativo e normativo, non repressivo, ponendosi oltre le categorie di lecito e illecito della legge dello stato. *La teoria del capitale umano non è volta alla definizione di limiti nella sfera di azione umana, ma è piuttosto orientata a comprendere l'individuo nella sua radice biologica, definendo uno standard di normalità per il suo comportamento*. Emerge dunque una dicotomia tra normalità e anormalità, poiché se l'individuo è capitale umano allora esiste una maniera adeguata di comportarsi: investire nel proprio valore, sfruttando al massimo il proprio capitale. Lo standard di normalità biologica viene esteso al livello pubblico del dovere sociale, politico ed economico. Come argomenta l'investitore e futurologo George Gilder, la povertà non è un basso livello di reddito, ma uno stato mentale. Le nozioni di povertà, ricchezza e reddito diventano indicatori, o piuttosto sintomi, dello stato di salute, dello stato di normalità di un individuo nella sua interezza. "La formazione del capitale umano è disciplina dell'esistenza volta a creare le condizioni affinché possa emergere qualcosa come l'individuo-impresa"[1].

Il problema, oggi, è capire perché il neoliberalismo sia riemerso politicamente più forte dalla crisi finanziaria del 2008. *Si tratta di capire che si sta parlando di qualcosa di più di un insieme di politiche economiche o di una ideologia dominante: il neoliberalismo ha la capacità di produrre relazioni*

[1] S. Marengo (2015). 'La razionalità neoliberale. Antropologia del capitale umano a partire da Michel Foucault'. *Etica & Politica/Ethics & Politics*, 17(1), p. 224.

sociali, è una forma di esistenza, una modalità di comportarsi. In questo senso, è una modalità di formare l'individuo. La teoria del capitale umano considera tutti gli individui equivalenti nella misura in cui sono guidati, in modo naturale, da interessi e logiche di investimento di valore. La dimensione biologica del neoliberalismo è il capitalismo incorporato nell'individuo: "siamo tutti imprenditori" è l'utopia neoliberista. L'obiettivo è quello di nascondere l'opposizione tra capitalista e lavoratore producendo nuove soggettività. Si tratta di una sorta di "capitalismo senza capitalismo", che mantiene (e acuisce) l'ingiusta distribuzione di ricchezze, la produzione di stratificazioni sociali e la proprietà privata, ma riesce a farlo nascondendo le lotte sociali con il metodo paradossale di estendere la logica capitalistica a ogni tipo di relazione.

La *gestione delle risorse umane* è un interessante caso di studio per rivelare i meccanismi di valorizzazione del capitale umano nella società neoliberale contemporanea. La tendenza generale è quella di uno spostamento dalle relazioni collettive del sindacato con l'impresa, a relazioni di lavoro individuali e alla commercializzazione del personale. Si assiste oggi a una liberalizzazione dei contratti di lavoro: la sfera giuridica è infatti screditata e attaccata perché responsabile di "irrigidire" l'impresa. Il mercato globale esige una "flessibilità" che favorisce lo smantellamento dell'edificio legislativo. *La gestione delle risorse umane deve allora ricorre a un altro tipo di contratto, quello che Massimiliano Nicoli definisce contratto "psicologico"*: "la posta in gioco del contratto psicologico [...] sarà la costituzione di un 'soggetto assoggettato' tramite estrazione, dal soggetto stesso, della 'verità che gli viene imposta', [...] l'identificazione fra individuo e impresa"[2]. Durante le interviste e le altre tecniche di selezione del personale, il consulente deve permettere al candidato di esprimersi liberamente e lasciare trasparire i tratti della personalità che non si possono leggere nel *curriculum vitae*, "in modo da poter costruire

[2] M. Nicoli (2012). 'Io sono un'impresa. Biopolitica e capitale umano'. *Aut Aut*, 365, p. 93.

un'immagine il più possibile veritiera ed esaustiva della risorsa"[3]. Nelle pratiche della gestione delle risorse umane il consulente diventa maestro spirituale, e aiuta l'individuo a esplorare la propria anima, a conoscere sé stesso (*gnothi seauton*), per scoprire la sua vera natura, per recuperare da sé la verità che gli viene imposta. *Nel contratto psicologico infatti la posta in gioco è l'identificazione dell'individuo con l'impresa*.

Bob Aubrey, un esperto internazionale di "sviluppo umano", trae dal concetto di *epimeleia heautou,* "cura di sé", studiato da Foucault, l'ispirazione per sviluppare il concetto di "impresa di sé stessi" (*personal enterprise*). "Cura di sé", in particolare, viene equiparato a "impresa di sé", perché la valorizzazione commerciale del proprio lavoro corrisponde alla valorizzazione di sé *tout court*. Tutto è considerato impresa: dal momento in cui il bambino comincia ad andare a scuola diventa un imprenditore della propria conoscenza. La saggezza contemporanea corrisponde alla capacità di praticare tecniche di auto-diagnosi e, magari con l'aiuto di un consulente di strategie di vita (*life strategic adviser*), valutare e migliorare le proprie capacità e conoscenze (lavorative), i propri modi di agire, le proprie possibilità di successo. *L'interezza della vita diventa un "portafoglio d'attività" da valorizzare. Ancora una volta, l'obiettivo complessivo è quello di "addestrare" il lavoratore a identificarsi con l'impresa.*

In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault descrive il "*discorso*" come qualcosa di polivalente, nella misura in cui produce potere ma allo stesso tempo lo indebolisce, senza che esista una dicotomia tra il discorso del potere e il discorso contro di esso. Esiste una molteplicità di elementi discorsivi che entrano in gioco a perseguire varie strategie. Tuttavia, come argomenta Jason Read, *la razionalità neoliberale sembra aver perso proprio la polivalenza del discorso*, poiché non c'è più differenza tra cittadino e *homo œconomicus*: *esiste un solo tipo di relazione, basata sulla competizione e sull'interesse economico*. Tutte le relazioni

[3] D. Boldizzoni (2007). *Management delle risorse umane. Dalla gestione del lavoratore dipendente alla valorizzazione del capitale umano*. Milan, Il Sole-24 ore, p. 81.

sono formulate in termini di interessi, libertà e rischi: non c'è tensione tra varie logiche, che produrrebbero soggettività diverse. Stati, imprese, individui sono tutti guidati dalla stessa logica dell'interesse e della competizione. La pervasività della logica univoca del neoliberalismo è il motivo principale per cui immaginare delle alternative è diventato impossibile.

La terza sezione della tesi riguarda le prospettive di ricerca. Dal momento che la seconda sezione della tesi potrebbe essere assimilata ai cosiddetti "studi governamentali", inaugurati dal celebre volume di Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon e Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (1991), si analizzano alcuni aspetti di questa prospettiva. Ne emerge che le nozioni di governamentalità e potere disciplinare vengono utilizzate da questi autori in maniera sistematica e conclusiva per rigettare macro-teorizzazioni come quelle di stampo marxista, rifiutando di inquadrare le pratiche micro-fisiche del potere in progetti e programmi di più ampio respiro. Tuttavia, questo sembra in contrasto con il metodo di ricerca di Foucault, il quale era interessato anche al ruolo dello stato all'interno dell'articolazione generale del potere, e in particolare, con le lezioni del 1978-79 su liberalismo e neoliberalismo, si era spinto verso un genere di analisi del potere di macro-livello.

Infine, si *tenta un accostamento complementare di Michel Foucault e Antonio Gramsci, con l'obiettivo di recuperare una nozione di resistenza, volta alla trasformazione sociale, che tragga ispirazione da entrambi,* nella convinzione che le analisi di questi due pensatori siano più produttive e significative se considerate assieme, una accanto all'altra, invece che separatamente. L'attenzione di Gramsci nei confronti dei gruppi subalterni, e la possibilità di questi gruppi di organizzarsi in pratiche contro-egemoniche rimane un aspetto fondamentale dell'azione politica contemporanea. Nonostante le categorie, utilizzate da Gramsci, di proletariato urbano, rurale, piccola borghesia e simili risultino probabilmente inutilizzabili nella contemporaneità, nondimeno esistono oggi processi di stratificazione gerarchica che portano studenti, precari,

lavoratori sottopagati a ribellarsi come, per esempio, nel movimento *Occupy Wall Street*. Foucault parla di "conoscenze soggiogate" per indicare quel genere di saperi "squalificati" perché inadeguati o insufficientemente elaborati rispetto al discorso scientifico. I reclami dei manifestanti di *Occupy Wall Street* sono stati spesso rigettati in quanto illegittimi, locali, incoerenti, argomentando che ci sono modi più opportuni di migliore la condizione economica del "99%"; per esempio, secondo Mike Brownfield della *The Heritage Foundation,* sbarazzandosi dell'interventismo governativo e lasciando lavorare la libera impresa.

Se da un lato la teoria del potere di Foucault permette di comprendere le relazioni di potere in una maniera più sofisticata, poiché il potere può manifestarsi in una miriade di forme e non è semplicemente costretto in una relazione binaria tra chi lo possiede e chi ne è soggiogato; dall'altro, se il potere è davvero così pervasivo e difficile da individuare, la contestazione diventa impossibile. L'individuo, in altre parole, è impotente e incapace di resistenza, perché da solo non può né individuare, né contestare, i poteri disciplinari e i discorsi normalizzanti a cui è soggetto. Gramsci, diversamente dal filosofo francese, teorizza largamente sulle strategie e sugli agenti necessari per praticare la resistenza. Anche nel discorso di Gramsci l'individuo è sopraffatto dall'ubiquità dell'egemonia, e quindi la resistenza può essere attuata solo da un agente collettivo, che il teorico marxista identifica nel partito politico, il "Principe Moderno", ossia il protagonista della lotta politica. L'obiettivo del partito è quello di stabilire la contro-egemonia dal basso, compiendo uno sforzo collettivo per rovesciare l'egemonia della classe dominante.

Introduction

Zygmunt Bauman uses the metaphor of *liquid modernity* to indicate that forms of modern life share these common features: "fragility, temporariness, vulnerability and inclination to constant change"; and that "change is the only permanence"[4]. This metaphor has a strong explanatory power and it helps to dismiss once and for all old social classifications, namely peasant, proletarian and bourgeois; lower-middle classes and upper-middle class and so on. Yet, if these rigid old categories are today difficult to use, under the appearance of "liquefied" social relations, mobility and variability, new dynamics and processes generate new hierarchical classifications, even more strikingly than in the past[5]. In 2015, 62 individuals, 53 men and 9 women, own the same wealth as 3.6 billion people, the bottom half of humanity. And the situation is worsening year after year: in 2010, the figure was of 388 individuals[6]. The liquid modernity metaphor risks to fail to account for a fundamental *constant* of our neoliberal societies: the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. These 62 individuals are the happy few of a selective process of social stratification of our contemporary societies.

When I chose the topic of my dissertation, my aim was straightforward. I wanted to understand why, despite the claims of many optimistic innovators and apologists of limitless market capitalism, are there still so many contradictions in our globalized neoliberal societies: economic inequality and poverty, anxiety and insecurity, anger and despair. I wanted to investigate the root of the problem.

---

[4] Z. Bauman (2012). 'Foreword to the 2012 Edition Liquid Modernity Revisited'. In *Liquid Modernity* [eBook]. Cambridge, UK, Polity Press.

[5] Cf. G. Galasso (2016). 'La Società Liquida Categoria Ingannevole', *Corriere Della Sera*, accessed 26 January 2016, http://www.corriere.it/opinioni/16_gennaio_27/societa-liquida-categoria-ingannevole-5b4e056c-c466-11e5-8e0c-7baf441d5d56.shtml.

[6] D. Hardoon, S. Ayele and R. Fuentes-Nieva (2016). 'An Economy for the 1%: How privilege and power in the economy drive extreme inequality and how this can be stopped'. *Oxfam Briefing Paper 210*, accessed 26 January 2016, http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/bp210-economy-one-percent-tax-havens-180116-en.pdf, p. 1.

The promises of our globalized neoliberal societies, namely a better life for everyone, digital and cultural innovations, development of talents, the apology of the heroic bravery of the entrepreneur, stories of success, etc.; all of this clashes with an underlying truth: the ruthless and all-embracing competition, the workfare of enterprises, in which only a few individuals manage to "success".

This approach to the critique of society is generally associated with the so-called criticism of neoliberalism. However, there are a *variety of criticisms* of neoliberalism; thus, why should one prefer an approach rather than another one? Which one is more effective? Which one has more explanatory power? Why should one, for example, adopt a neo-Marxist perspective for the criticism of society, rather than a Foucauldian one? Further, are these approaches compatible?

Neoliberalism, I think, is a complex and multi-faced phenomenon; it is not easy to grasp nor with a univocal definition. For this reason, I shall begin my dissertation with a study of the most relevant and popular usages of this term, together with their associated theories: neoliberalism as a general critical category, neoliberalism as the only plausible economic policy agenda, neoliberalism as the specific economic policy of the English-speaking countries, neoliberalism as the dominant economic ideology of global capitalism, and neoliberalism as a new form of governmentality.

During my critical review, I acknowledge that the neo-Marxist and the neo-Foucauldian accounts are the most relevant interpretations of neoliberalism; yet I argue that they are not entirely compatible with each other. I underline the limits of several neo-Marxist accounts and support the hypothesis that a neo-Foucauldian perspective has more explanatory power as it discloses several peculiar points of neoliberalism. In particular, I argue that the Foucauldian analysis of the human capital theory paves the way for one of the most effective critique of neoliberalism today.

Thus, in the second part of this dissertation, adopting a neo-Foucauldian perspective, I advance a critique of the neoliberal subjectivity. I focus on the anthropology of human capital, Human Resource Management techniques and practices, Personal Enterprise as a contemporary form of wisdom, and, more generally, the production of neoliberal subjectivities.

Finally, in the third part, I acknowledge that the analyses I carried out in the second part of my dissertation, focused on the "microphysics" side of power and bottom-up mechanisms, need to be constantly verified by concrete empirical in-depth macro-analyses of the society. To rephrase, these analyses need to maintain a link with the "bigger picture", that is to say, with the macro-level of institutions, classes and societies. I acknowledge that there are several aspects of neo-Marxist perspectives which are fundamental and should not be quickly rejected. In this sense, I study "another Foucault effect": the possibility to find, in the work of the French philosopher, some aspects concerning not merely the deconstruction of state theory (against Marx and structuralism), but also a number of significant contributions to it. To conclude, I attempt a dialogue between Gramsci and Foucault. In particular, I investigate the possibility of a theoretical position different from that of a mere *aut-aut*, which might be called a complementarity hypothesis; second, I compare the Gramscian notion of "subaltern" groups with the Foucauldian analysis of "subjugated knowledges"; third, I explore the possibility of a theory of social transformation through a notion of resistance which draws both from Gramsci and Foucault.

1. THEORIES OF NEOLIBERALISM

1.1 The usage and the meanings of the term "neoliberalism"

The term "neoliberalism" can refer to several meanings, so many that it is difficult, if not impossible, to use this category without a preliminary note on its specific usage. Anthropologist Donald Nonini, for example, prefers to refer to the plural "neoliberalisms", explaining that

> 'Neoliberalism' is a term that is difficult to theorize with, because it has so many different meanings, both formally and in context. Thus it has been referred to variously as an 'ideology' or, relatedly, a 'hegemony' or 'hegemonic project' (as used by e.g. Stuart Hall, 1988), or 'doctrine' (as in the 'Chicago School' of Milton Friedman et al.), or a 'rhetoric', or 'discourse' and 'discursive formation', or a 'logic of governance' and a 'governmentality' (Gordon, 1991)[7].

A further problem is that some of these meanings are not compatible with each other. An article by Terry Flew tried to deal with this issue, distinguishing six different (and in some cases incompatible) meanings of neoliberalism. In brief, it emerges this taxonomy (from the abstract):

> (1) an all-purpose denunciatory category; (2) 'the way things are'; (3) an institutional framework characterizing particular forms of national capitalism, most notably the Anglo-American ones; (4) a dominant ideology of global capitalism; (5) a form of governmentality and hegemony; and (6) a variant within the broad framework of liberalism as both theory and policy discourse[8].

[7] D. M. Nonini (2008). 'Is China Becoming Neoliberal?'. *Critique Of Anthropology* 28 (2), p. 149.
[8] T. Flew (2014). 'Six Theories Of Neoliberalism'. *Thesis Eleven* 122 (1), p. 49.

Before giving an outline of each of the meanings, Flew highlights in the introduction, with the help of Google *Culturomics* application, that the term was hardly used prior to early 1990s[9]. To obtain this piece of information, the application performed a lexical analysis of more than 15 million books, scanned into the Google library in 2012[10]. From the analysis of the period 1980-2010, it emerges that, progressively, the usage of the term became mainstream, overcoming the usage of the term "monetarism", as it is visible from this chart:

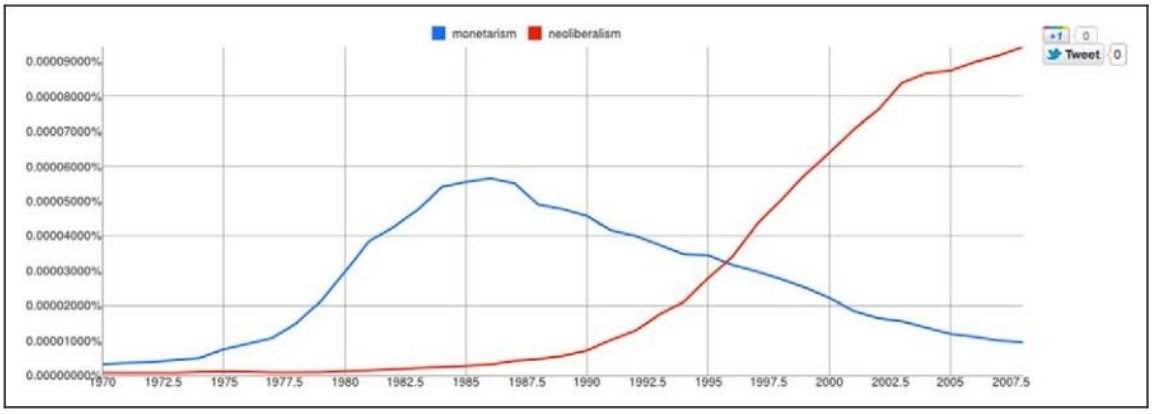

Figure 1. Use of the terms 'monetarism' and 'neoliberalism', 1980–2010 (as measured by *Google Ngram*)[11].

Along similar lines, in the field of socio-cultural anthropology, Andrew Kipnis notes that, while during the decade before 2002 "less than 10 per cent of the articles published in the journals *American Ethnologist* and *Cultural Anthropology* use the term 'neoliberal', 35 per cent (84 out of 239) of the articles in those journals use that term over the four years from 2002 to 2005"[12]. The term, not surprisingly, is invoked to refer to a variety of meanings, from "a type of economic policy, to an overarching economic or even cultural structure, or,

[9] *Ibidem.*
[10] *Ivi,* p. 50.
[11] *Ibidem.*
[12] A. Kipnis (2007). 'Neoliberalism reified: suzhi discourse and tropes of neoliberalism in the People's Republic of China'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13(2), p. 383.

closer to the ground, to particular attitudes or inclinations towards entrepreneurship, competition, responsibility, and self-improvement"[13].

Taylor C. Boas and Jordan Gans-Morse, in an article published in 2009, focus on a variety of issues related to the usage of the term "neoliberalism" (from the abstract: "the term is often undefined; it is employed unevenly across ideological divides; and it is used to characterize an excessively broad variety of phenomena"[14]). It is important to stress that these two authors, similarly to Flew, noted that "[f]rom only a handful of mentions in the 1980s, use of the term has exploded during the past two decades, appearing in nearly 1,000 academic articles annually between 2002 and 2005"[15]. They represent graphically these findings in a chart, which is useful to complete the information provided by *Figure 1*:

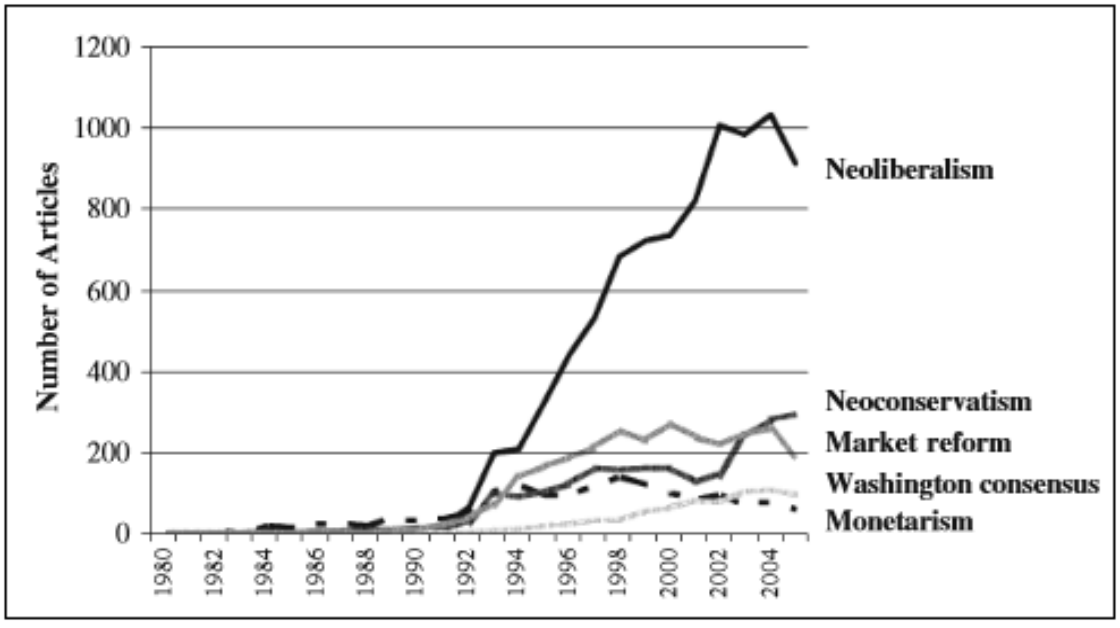

Figure 2. Neoliberalism and related terms in academic journals, 1980–2005. Results are based on full-text searches of peer-reviewed, English-

[13] *Ibidem.*
[14] T. C. Boas and J. Gans-Morse (2009). 'Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan'. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 44(2), p. 137.
[15] *Ivi,* p. 138.

language academic journals in the Infotrac Expanded Academic ASAP database[16].

The information provided in this chart is complementary to that provided in *Figure 1*. Both studies agree on a gradual and stable increase in the usage of the term "neoliberalism", starting from a negligible usage at the beginning of the 1990s, to become frequent by early 2000s.

Now that I have highlighted the period in which this term emerged in the scholarly literature and became mainstream, I shall return to the Flew's taxonomy cited above, as a starting point to study the different ways in which this term has been employed. In particular, I will study these interpretations or theories of neoliberalism:

1.1.1 Neoliberalism as a general critical category

1.1.2 Neoliberalism as the only plausible economic policy agenda

1.1.3 Neoliberalism as the specific economic policy of the English-speaking countries

1.1.4 Neoliberalism as the dominant economic ideology of global capitalism

1.1.5 Neoliberalism as a new form of governmentality.

[16] *Ibidem.*

1.1.1 Neoliberalism as a general critical category

The first way in which the term has been used is "as an all-purpose denunciatory category"[17]. This refers to the fact that neoliberalism has been treated by some scholars as a phenomenon spreading everywhere and in everything. As Nonini pointed out, "'the term 'neo-liberal' has recently appeared so frequently, and been applied with such abandon, that it risks being used to refer to almost any political, economic, social or cultural process associated with contemporary capitalism"[18].

To give a concrete example of this particular usage of the term, it is useful to briefly examine this excerpt of a 2010 essay by Henry Giroux, a leading figure of the critical pedagogy movement:

> With the advent of *neoliberalism*, or what some call *free-market fundamentalism*, we have witnessed the production and widespread adoption within educational theory and practice of what I want to call the politics of *economic Darwinism*. As a *theater of cruelty* and mode of public pedagogy, economic Darwinism undermines most forms of solidarity while promoting the logic of unchecked competition and unbridled individualism. As the welfare state is dismantled, it is increasingly replaced by the harsh realities of the punishing state as social problems are increasingly criminalized and social protections are either eliminated or fatally weakened[19] [the italics is mine].

Giroux here imply that if you dare to endorse any of the core concepts of his criticism (underlined in italics) you are politically compromised. In other

---

[17] Flew (2014), p. 49.
[18] Nonini (2008), p. 149. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 51.
[19] H. A. Giroux (2010). 'Public Values, Higher Education and the Scourge of Neoliberalism: Politics at the Limits of the Social'. *Culture Machine*, accessed 16 October 2015: http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/article/view/426/444. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 52.

words, this kind of argumentation presumes the reader to agree with the author. The problem with this reasoning is that the only possible type of reader is the one that knows well in advance if s/he is going to agree with the author of the text. To rephrase, this kind of argumentation automatically annihilate any possibility of debate or, in other terms, one cannot subject these claims to any "Popperian criteria of falsifiability"[20].

As a result, it is not surprising if those who believe that markets have a positive role in the society do not even take seriously these lines of reasoning, rejecting the entire essay possibly without wholly reading it. Mitchell Dean summarize this point in an insightful manner, remarking that the Institute for Public Affairs, a Melbourne based public policy think tank endorsing free market economic policies, depicts neoliberalism as "a leftist version of the secret handshake; a signal that the reader is with fellow travellers"[21].

From another point of view, Boas and Gans-Morse note that "neo-liberalism has come to signify a radical form of market fundamentalism with which no one wants to be associated"[22]; further, and even more strikingly, "the term is effectively used in different ways, such that its appearance in any given article offers little clue as to what it actually means"[23]. In particular, they give an historical explanation for the tendency of some current scholars to use this term with an unclear negative connotation. As a matter of fact, they argue, neoliberalism had a positive connotation when it was initially coined by the Freiburg School of German economists, for it indicated a type of moderate philosophy compared to the classical liberalism, rejecting laissez-faireism and endorsing humanistic values. To rephrase, neoliberalism (or, in this context,

[20] Flew (2014), p. 52.
[21] M. Dean (2010). 'A response to the question 'What is neoliberalism?''. Paper presented to 'Contesting Neoliberalism and its Future', *Australian Academy of the Social Sciences Workshop*, University of Sydney. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 52.
[22] Boas and Gans-Morse (2009), p. 138. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 52.
[23] *Ivi*, p. 139. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 52.

ordoliberalism) had a positive normative valence as it represented, to the eyes of these German scholars a new, improved form of classical liberalism[24]. It is only on a later stage, when Chilean intellectuals introduced the term to criticize the economic reforms of dictator Pinochet, that neoliberalism earned its negative normative connotation and markets advocates started to avoid the term. According to Boas and Gans-Morse, it is precisely this asymmetrical usage of neoliberalism that contributed to the tendency of some contemporary scholars "to apply the term neoliberalism broadly, yet offer few precise definitions"[25]. Beside the overwhelming problem of lack of definition, the two authors argue, in more technical terms, that "scholars fail to debate the intension and extension of neoliberalism because of the conjunction of *terminological contestation* and the *contested normative valence* of the underlying concepts to which the term can refer"[26].

German economist Oliver Marc Hartwich highlights the strikingly similar ways in which Alexander Rüstow, the sociologist and economist that invented the term "neoliberalism", and Kevin Rudd, the former Australian Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, criticized the market after the crisis of their time (the Great Depression in the 1930s and the 2008 financial crisis, respectively)[27]. In particular, Rudd stated in 2009, in an essay published in *The Monthly*, that

> [the crisis] has called into question the prevailing [...] neo-liberal orthodoxy that has underpinned the national and global regulatory frameworks that have so spectacularly failed to prevent the economic mayhem which has now been visited upon us. [Further,] in the past year we have seen how unchecked market forces have brought capitalism to the

[24] *Ivi*, p. 145.
[25] *Ivi*, p. 139.
[26] *Ivi*, p. 156.
[27] O. M. Hartwich (2009). 'Neoliberalism: The Genesis of a Political Swearword'. *The Centre for Independent Studies*, CIS Occasional Paper 114, pp. 5-6.

> precipice [...] Neither governments nor the peoples they represent any longer have confidence in an unregulated system of extreme capitalism[28].

The other commentator, the ordoliberal Rüstow that invented the term "neoliberalism", diagnosed "[the] chaos of a pluralist, predatory economy [and the] failure of economic liberalism". According to his argumentation, it was needed "a strong state, a state above the economy, above the interest groups where it belongs"[29]. This example gives a clear understanding of the problem with the usage of the term "neoliberalism" as a vague category of objection to the market. As it emerged here, Rudd and similar critics of neoliberalism are utterly unaware of the fact that one of the characterizing features of the initial neoliberal conceptualization was precisely to "put a check on unfettered markets and market power"[30].

Authors that use the term in the generic critical way described above are usually likely to understate the form of government in power in a given context, with the result that debates on formal politics is largely absent in their argumentations. "It would appear not to matter, for instance, which political party is in power in any given country, since all established political parties are presumed to adhere to the broader project of neoliberalism"[31]. Instead, a greater importance is usually given to the "politics of knowledge"[32]. Rather than a precise critics to conventional politics and institutions of government, neoliberalism is used here as a "conceptual trash heap capable of accommodating multiple distasteful phenomena without much argument as to whether one or the other component really belongs"[33].

---

[28] Cited in Hartwich (2009), p. 5.
[29] *Ivi*, p. 5.
[30] *Ivi*, p. 6.
[31] Flew (2014), p. 52.
[32] *Ibidem*.
[33] Boas and Gans-Morse (2009), p. 156. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 53.

According to Flew, another critical problem related to the usage of the term "neoliberalism" as a concept "oft-invoked but ill-defined"[34] is that, using this category to explain "everything from reality television to university restructuring"[35] without a delimited and appropriate definition, one risks to produce "conspiracy theories" as described by Bruno Latour[36]. As Latour puts it:

> What's the real difference between conspiracists and a popularized, that is a teachable version of social critique inspired by a too quick reading of, let's say, a sociologist as eminent as Pierre Bourdieu [...]? In both cases, you have to learn to become suspicious of everything people say because of course we all know that they live in the thralls of a complete *illusio* of their real motives. Then, after disbelief has struck and an explanation is requested for what is really going on, in both cases again it is the same appeal to powerful agents hidden in the dark acting always consistently, continuously, relentlessly. Of course, we in the academy like to use more elevated causes—society, discourse, knowledge-slash-power, fields of forces, empires, capitalism—while conspiracists like to portray a miserable bunch of greedy people with dark intents, but *I find something troublingly similar in the structure of the explanation, in the first movement of disbelief and, then, in the wheeling of causal explanations coming out of the deep dark below*. What if explanations resorting automatically to power, society, discourse had outlived their usefulness and deteriorated to the point of now feeding the most gullible sort of critique? Maybe I am taking conspiracy theories too seriously, but *it worries me to detect, in those mad mixtures of knee-jerk disbelief, punctilious demands for proofs, and free use of powerful explanation from the social neverland many of the weapons of social critique*[37] [the last two italics are mine].

---

[34] S. L. Mudge (2008). "The State of the Art: What is neo-liberalism?', *Socio-Economic Review*, 6(4), p. 703. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 53.
[35] Flew (2014), p. 53.
[36] B. Latour (2004). 'Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern'. *Critical Inquiry*, 30(2), p. 229. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 53.
[37] Latour (2004), pp. 229-230.

1.1.2 Neoliberalism as the only plausible economic policy agenda

According to Flew, the second manner in which the term neoliberalism has been used is to indicate "the way things are"[38]. One of the most relevant example of the kind of reasoning is a declaration of former Labour Prime Minister Jim Callaghan, remarking in 1976 the end of Keynesianism in Great Britain. He addressed this statement to the Labour Party Conference of that year: "We used to think you could spend your way out of a recession and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting government spending. I can tell you in all candour that that option no longer exists"[39].

Three years later, in 1979, Margaret Thatcher won the General Elections and became prime minister of the United Kingdom, emerging as one of the most influential leaders in the history of the Conservative Party. She invented and used in several occasions the slogan "there is no alternative" (TINA) to underline, similarly to Callaghan, the inevitability of liberal economy and free markets in particular, the only remaining successful ideology after the end of communism regimes and the crisis of Keynesianism. To understand her argumentation, it is useful to consider this extract from a 1981 BBC Radio interview:

> **PM** [Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher]
>
> [...] Britain really has the will-power and the determination to overcome her problems. And the policies are starting to work. In a number of industries their productivity is going up. They are getting orders. Chemicals are doing better. Metals are doing better. Engineering orders are coming in. We are winning very good overseas contracts against competition. It is starting to work—its patchy—but it's starting to work.
>
> **JY** [interviewer Jimmy Young]

[38] Flew (2014), p. 49.
[39] Cited in Flew (2014), p. 53.

So are you saying then that you would propose to fight the next General Election on the existing policies? You wouldn't turn at all?

PM

Look, can I put it this way, *what is the alternative?*

JY

Well there are several alternatives. I mean the CBI and TUC are putting up...

PM

No they are not putting up an alternative which does not put us back into inflation. Now if we go straight back into inflation I can only say that any Government, inflation is setting out to print money without it being backed by production[40] [the italics is mine].

The TINA slogan, first used by Margaret Thatcher, became then popular among other right-wing parties across Europe, such as the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU), as it is clear from the political advertising material showed below in *figure 3*. Similarly to Thatcher, yet more explicitly, Francis Fukuyama argued in a 1989 essay[41] that, with the collapse of all communist regimes, the only remaining successful ideology was liberalism, as democracy and market capitalism "had triumphed over all other governmental and economic systems or sets of ordering principles"[42].

[40] M. Thatcher (1981). 'Radio Interview For BBC Radio 2 Jimmy Young Programme'. *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, accessed 23 October 2015, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104529.

[41] F. Fukuyama (1989). 'The End of History?'. *National Interest*. Afterwards, he expanded the essay in his 1992 book *The end of history and the last man*. New York, Free Press.

[42] J. Mueller (2014). 'Did History End? Assessing the Fukuyama Thesis'. *Political Science Quarterly,* 129(1), p. 35.

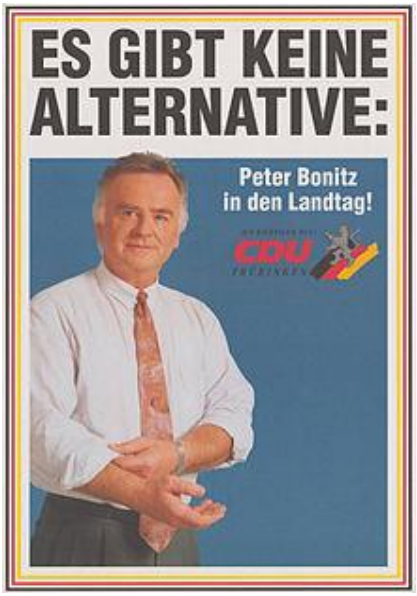

Figure 3. "There is no alternative: Peter Bonitz to the Landtag [State Diet]!". An example of a 1994 advertising campaign sign of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU)[43].

Another enlightening example of the peculiarity of Thatcherism is a quote published in 1981 in the weekly newspaper *News of the World*, where she declared: "My policies are based not on some economics theory, but on things I and millions like me were brought up with: an honest day's work for an honest day's pay; live within your means; put by a nest egg for a rainy day; pay your bills on time; support the police"[44]. This was an interesting way to persuade voters that there really were no alternatives, identifying her policies not with a particular ideology, yet rather with the simplest logic and understandable common sense.

Interestingly, when Thatcher was asked to name her most important achievement, she immediately replied: "New Labour"[45]. She was right in

---

[43] Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, image, accessed 23 October 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/There_is_no_alternative#/media/File:KAS-Bonitz,_Peter-Bild-15535-1.jpg.

[44] Cited in NBC News, 'The Quotable Thatcher: 15 Of Her Best Quips', accessed 23 October 2015, http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/04/08/17654349-the-quotable-thatcher-15-of-her-best-quips?lite.

[45] Cited in S. Žižek (2014). 'Towards a New Master' in *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism* [eBook]. London, Allen Lane.

understanding that her greatest victory was precisely that of convincing her centre-left enemies to adopt her fundamental economic policies[46]. According to Stuart Hall, Tony Blair gave birth to a new hybrid, repositioning himself and his party from the centre-left to the centre-right, with his "New Labour variant of neoliberalism"[47]. In particular, New Labour embraced the "managerial marketization", liberalizing actively the economy, confining and restricting the society "by legislation, regulation, monitoring, surveillance and the ambiguous 'target' and 'control' cultures"[48]. Apparently, the Third Way intellectual Tony Giddens further persuaded Blair in believing "that nothing could resist 'the unstoppable advance of market forces'"[49].

As far as the United States is concerned, Bill Clinton famously asserted in his 1992 presidential campaign that, if elected, he would have "end[ed] the welfare state as we know it"[50]. This Third Way position was necessary for him to address the concerns of that part of the middle-class that wanted something to be done about the issue of "welfare dependency"[51]. In another occasion, when he was in office in 1998, he declared, during the State of the Union address: "My fellow Americans, we have found a Third Way [...] [We have] moved past the sterile debate between those who say government is the enemy and those who say it is the answer"[52]. Similarly to Thatcher, here the alternatives were simply dismissed as no longer necessary, as the solution, to wit a third way between socialism and liberal capitalism, has been found.

Keith Tribe argues that, even if the neoliberal policy agenda adopted by Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, Bill Clinton and many others, suffers from a bad

---

[46] *Ibidem.*
[47] S. Hall (2011). 'The Neoliberal Revolution'. *Soundings,* 48(1), p. 11.
[48] *Ibidem.*
[49] *Ibidem.*
[50] Cited in B. O'Connor (2002), 'Policies, Principles, And Polls: Bill Clinton's Third Way Welfare Politics 1992-1996', *Australian Journal Of Politics And History* 48(3), p. 396.
[51] *Ibidem.*
[52] *Ibidem.*

reputation it is "now so deeply embedded in the reflexes of the world's ruling elites and line managers that they have difficulty conceiving the world in any other way"[53]. Mark Fisher, the author of *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative?*, uses a different category to make a similar claim, arguing that "[c]apitalist realism isn't the direct endorsement of neoliberal doctrine; it's the idea that, whether we like it or not, the world is governed by neoliberal ideas, and that won't change. There's no point fighting the inevitable"[54]. Further, he argues that, when Thatcher first stated that there were no alternatives, "she was saying that there is no *viable* alternative to neoliberal capitalism. By 1997, there was no *imaginable* alternative"[55].

[53] K. Tribe (2009). 'The political economy of modernity: Foucault's College de France lectures of 1978 and 1979'. *Economy and Society*, 38(4), p. 694. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 54.
[54] M. Fisher and J. Gilbert (2013). 'Capitalist Realism and Neoliberal Hegemony: A Dialogue'. *New Formations*, 80(1), p. 90.
[55] *Ivi*, p. 91.

1.1.3 Neoliberalism as the specific economic policy of the English-speaking countries

The third manner in which the term neoliberalism has been employed is to identify "a policy doctrine of the English-speaking world"[56]. To begin with the reasoning, I shall start by considering, in outline, the literature on the institutional diversity of capitalist economies.

Richard Nelson argues that considering all capitalist countries identical, because based on a market economy, risk to blur and simplify the "complex and variegated way that economic activity actually is governed, which involves a wide range of non-market elements"[57]. There exist varieties of capitalism and, despite the claim of some scholars, from a review of the literature on policy convergence made by Daniel W. Drezner, it emerges that globalization did not produce an automatic intersection of economic and environmental policies, yet rather "[w]here harmonization has occurred, it has been a conscious choice of states made under the aegis of an international organization"[58].

Richard Whitley identifies four types of states, which correspond to the development of "different kinds of approaches to the regulation and management of capital and labour markets, as well as institutionalizing varied political cultures and legal systems"[59]. Briefly, these models of state are, according to Whitley, "arm's length, dominant developmental, business corporatist, and inclusive

---

[56] Flew (2014), p. 54.
[57] R. R. Nelson (2011), 'The Complex Economic Organization Of Capitalist Economies', *Capitalism And Society*, 6(1), p. 2.
[58] D. W. Drezner (2001). 'Globalization and Policy Convergence'. *International Studies Review*, 3(1), p. 75.
[59] R. Whitley (2005). 'How national are business systems? The role of states and complementary institutions in standardizing systems of coordination and control at the national level'. In G. Morgan, R. Whitley and E. Moen. *Changing capitalisms? Internationalisation, institutional change and systems of economic organization*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 196.

corporatist"[60]. This institutional variety is further developed in an article by Glenn Morgan, where he links this taxonomy to the role that multinational corporations have in affecting the relations between pivotal actors, and therefore to the institutional diversity in each of the four different types of state[61].

Bruno Amable, basing his argumentation on a theory of institutions and comparative capitalism, identifies five models of capitalist societies:

- the market-based economies (aka liberal market economies or the Anglo-Saxon model)
- social-democratic economies
- Asian capitalism
- Continental European capitalism
- South European capitalism[62].

In particular, he shows that one group of countries emerges as remarkably alike: "The market based economies, the USA, UK, Canada, and Australia, constitute a highly homogeneous cluster, which is opposed to the Mediterranean cluster (Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece) on an axis separating 'flexible' markets (financial and labour markets) from 'rigid' markets"[63].

Hence, from this perspective, it is possible to advance an analysis or a criticism, not so much of market-based societies in general, yet rather of a specific cultural-geographical area, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia and their specific neoliberal policy agenda. As an example of this kind of argumentation, Michael Pusey asserts that "the evidence points [...] to the relative under-performance, based on conventional economic criteria, of

[60] *Ibidem*.
[61] G. Morgan (2009). 'Globalization, multinationals and institutional diversity'. *Economy and Society*, 38(4), p. 588.
[62] B. Amable (2003). *The diversity of modern capitalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 102.
[63] *Ivi*, p. 20.

the Anglophone hardline neo-liberal nations when compared to the social-democratic nations of Western Europe"[64]. In another study, Martin Jacques explains how the so-called Asian tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) managed to break into the club of advanced economies with an homespun economic approach, "owing relatively little to neo-liberalism or the Washington Consensus - the dominant Western ideology from the late seventies until the financial meltdown in 2008"[65].

However, as Flew points out, this way of presenting neoliberalism as a particular (and often unsuccessful) "recipe" among a variety of competing economic policies, has been abundantly overtook from the proliferating neo-Marxist narratives that describe neoliberalism as the rising ideology of the present form of global capitalism, "so that the world is seen as being, or becoming, more and more neoliberal in its institutional structures and policy choices"[66].

---

[64] M. Pusey (2010). '25 years of neo-liberalism in Australia'. In Robert Manne and David Mcknight. *Goodbye to All That? On the Failure of Neo-Liberalism and the Urgency of Change*. Melbourne, Black Ink, p. 14. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 55.
[65] M. Jacques (2009). 'The Rise of East Asian Modernity' in *When China rules the world: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*. New York, Penguin Press.
[66] Flew (2014), p. 55.

1.1.4. Neoliberalism as the dominant economic ideology of global capitalism

One of the most influential analyses of neoliberalism comes from neo-Marxist theorists. From this standpoint, a compelling definition of neoliberalism comes from Ge´rard Dume´nil and Dominique Le´vy, who describe it as "a new stage of capitalism that emerged in the wake of the structural crisis of the 1970s. It expresses the strategy of the capitalist classes in alliance with upper management, specifically financial managers, intending to strengthen their hegemony and to expand it globally"[67].

Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*

The popular book by Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, is a successful example of this kind of interpretations[68]. In her book, she argues that neoliberal policies, as formulated by the Chicago School economist Milton Friedman, were implemented in Chile with extensive use of violence by dictator Augusto Pinochet since 1975. She often returns on the crucial role of the CIA in overthrowing the left-wing Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1973, and the role of Friedman in influencing and guiding Pinochet as far as the economic policies of Chile were concerned. In Klein's telling, with the decisive support of the United States and other capitalist countries, the neoliberal doctrine was imposed not only in Chile, but also in Argentina, Indonesia and other countries. In showing the violent origins of neoliberalism, she maintains an evergreen truth that Marx stated: "In

[67] G. Dume´nil and D. Le´vy (2011). *The Crisis Of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, p. 1.
[68] N. Klein (2007). *The Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York, Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt.

actual history, it is a notorious fact that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, force, play the greatest part"[69].

The originality of her views rely on the concept of "disaster capitalism". This consists in a government's use of catastrophes that put the society in a state of shock and chaos, such as natural disasters, wars and so forth, to impose to the society a process of economic and social re-engineering. According to Klein, governments mainly use these kind of "opportunities" to re-model the state and impose a free-market society[70]. As an example of this, she explains that one of the worst natural disaster of the recent past, the terrible 2004 tsunami that killed 250,000 people in Sri Lanka (among other hit countries), resulted in the government eradication of traditional costal fishing communities in favor of the establishment of exclusive tourist resorts. The head of Sri Lanka's National Fisheries Solidarity Movement, Herman Kumara, described the process of reconstruction as "a second tsunami of corporate globalization", adding that "[p]eople were vehemently opposed to these policies in the past [...], [b]ut now they are starving in the camps, and they are just thinking about how to survive the next day [...]. So it's in that situation that the government pushes ahead with this plan. When people recover, they will find out what had been decided, but by then the damage will already be done"[71].

Klein explains that the neoliberal policies, implemented through the method of disaster capitalism, are not just typical of right-wing policy makers. Left-wing politicians use them, too. The problem is in the current concept of democracy itself: "[i]n contemporary history, the free market, which has been sold to us as being infinitely connected to freedom and democracy, has in fact

[69] K. Marx (1990). *Capital: Volume 1*. Trans. B. Fowkes, Harmondsworth, Penguin Classics, p. 874. Cited in P. Dardot and C. Laval (2013). *The new way of the world: on neoliberal society* [PDF]. Trans. G. Elliott, London, Verso, p. 11.
[70] B. Page (2007). 'The shocking truth'. *Bookseller*, 5287, pp. 22-23.
[71] Cited in Klein (2007), p. 395.

advanced through the exploitation of shock and disaster, through the most undemocratic means possible"[72].

David Harvey's *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*

David Harvey presents a more straightforward neo-Marxist interpretation of neoliberalism in his *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*[73]. He defines, in the first pages of his book, neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade"[74].

In this work, Harvey does not present a theoretical account of neoliberalism, focusing instead on its spatial and temporal development. Since 1970, this development was characterized by a series of crises and an uneven geographical extension. It is fundamental to understand, he argues, that the geographical difference in the economic development of competing territories fostered the progress of neoliberalization[75]. This happened because successful leading states (Germany, Taiwan, the United States, etc.), regions (Silicon Valley, Bavaria, Bangalore, etc.) or cities (Boston, Shanghai, Munich, etc.) put pressure on other territories to follow them; yet thanks to their "leapfrogging innovations", they managed to remain leaders in the rush for capital accumulation. However, this competitive advantage proved to be repeatedly fleeting, characterizing global

---

[72] Page (2007), p. 23.
[73] D. Harvey (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. Klein admits in the acknowledgments of her book: "[s]everal theorists and chroniclers of neoliberalism have shaped my thinking well beyond what citations can reflect: David Harvey (particularly *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*) and pretty much everything ever written by John Berger, Mike Davis and Arundhati Roy". In Klein (2007), p. 532.
[74] Harvey (2005), p. 2.
[75] *Ivi,* p. 87.

capitalism as highly uncertain. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Thatcher's United Kingdom and Reagan's United States led the way in this phase[76].

In spite of the neoliberal rhetoric, neither the United Kingdom nor the United States "achieved high levels of economic performance in the 1980s, suggesting that neoliberalism was not the answer to the capitalists' prayers"[77]. Instead, the two countries witnessed stagnating growth and raising income inequality. Without implementing straightforward neoliberal policies, Japan, West Germany and the "tiger" economies of East Asia managed to become the most competitive countries of the global economy in the 1980s, discrediting neoliberalism as the appropriate cure for "sick economies"[78]. For this reasons, several European countries preferred to emulate the West German model, instead of pursuing neoliberal reforms; while in Asia, Japan was the example that South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (the "Gang of Four") decided to pursue, followed by Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines[79].

A clear feature of neoliberalization, Harvey continues, was that of restoring class power to the elites. Therefore, weather a country wanted to pursue neoliberal policies or not, depended exactly on this point, and not in the eagerness to implement a high-performance economic recipe (as neoliberalism was proved not to be). For example, the strong union organizations in West Germany and Sweden played a major role in keeping reforms under control, thus delaying neoliberalization; and a similar deferment happened in Taiwan and South Korea, yet here because of the "dependency of the capitalist class on the state"[80].

The neoliberal project of restoring the elites started in the 1980s and strengthened in the 1990s, in an uneven manner, namely where it was possible to

[76] *Ivi*, p. 88.
[77] *Ibidem.*
[78] *Ibidem.*
[79] *Ivi,* p. 89.
[80] *Ivi,* p. 90.

implement these key components: a "turn to more open financialization"[81] and an increase to the "geographical mobility of capital"[82]. Further, "the Wall Street–IMF–Treasury complex that came to dominate economic policy in the Clinton years was able to persuade, cajole, and (thanks to structural adjustment programmes administered by the IMF) coerce many developing countries to take the neoliberal road"[83]. Finally, the diffusion, to a global level, of the "new monetarist and neoliberal economic orthodoxy" was also boosted thanks to the fact that, by 1982, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank banned Keynesian economics from their policies; in addition, by the end of the decade, the economics departments of most US universities adhered to neoliberalism, emphasizing "the control of inflation and sound public finance (rather than full employment and social protections) as primary goals of economic policy"[84].

Since the mid-1990s, all these points became part of the so-called "Washington Consensus". Joseph Stiglitz defines this term as "the oversimplified rendition of what it was that the international financial institutions and the U.S. Treasury recommended, especially during the period of the eighties and early nineties, before they became such a subject of vilification in both the North and the South"[85]. In his *The Roaring Nineties*, the Nobel prize-winning economist identifies in this decade the most prosperous period in world's history[86]. However, Stiglitz's criticism of the Clinton's administration is straightforward, as he argues that his most influential advisors were Federal Reserve Chair Alan

---

[81] *Ibidem.*
[82] *Ivi,* p. 92.
[83] *Ibidem.*
[84] *Ivi*, p. 93.
[85] J. E. Stiglitz (2004). 'The Post Washington Consensus Consensus'. *The Initiative for Policy Dialogue*, Columbia University, accessed 30 October 2015, http://policydialogue.org/files/events/Stiglitz_Post_Washington_Consensus_Paper.pdf..
[86] J. E. Stiglitz (2003). *The Roaring Nineties: A New History of the World's Most Prosperous Decade*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company.

Greenspan and Goldman Sachs executive Robert Rubin (eventually, the latter became treasury secretary). Together, they set an economic agenda where Wall Street's priorities became preeminent: deficit reduction, high levels of investment, deregulation and low inflation. This program, Stiglitz continues, is responsible for the stock market bubble and failure and the accounting scandals. His insights are particularly relevant as he was member of the Clinton Administration in the period 1993-1995, serving since 1995 as Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers and member of the cabinet by virtue of this role[87].

With a slightly different meaning from that of Stiglitz, John Williamson coined the term "Washington Consensus" in the 1980s, as he originally meant, with that expression, the "the lowest common denominator of policy advice being addressed by the Washington-based institutions [the IMF, the World Bank etc.] to Latin American countries as of 1989"[88]. According to Manfred Steger and Ravi Roy, in the 1990s, the Washington Consensus referred to the only legitimate framework to address global economic development issues, as the governments of the "South" were required to comply with these ten neoliberal points "in exchange for much-needed loans and debt-restructuring schemes"[89]:

1. A guarantee of fiscal discipline, and a curb to budget deficit
2. A reduction of public expenditure, particularly in the military and public administration
3. Tax reform, aiming at the creation of a system with a broad base and with effective enforcement
4. Financial liberalization, with interest rates determined by the market
5. Competitive exchange rates, to assist export-led growth

[87] A. Korinek. 'Brief Biography Of Joseph E. Stiglitz', *Columbia.Edu*, accessed 31 October 2015, https://www0.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty/jstiglitz/bio.cfm.
[88] J. Williamson (2000). 'What Should The World Bank Think About The Washington Consensus?'. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 15(2), p. 251.
[89] M. B. Steger and R. K. Roy (2010). *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 19.

6. Trade liberalization, coupled with the abolition of import licensing and a reduction of tariffs

7. Promotion of foreign direct investment

8. Privatization of state enterprises, leading to efficient management and improved performance

9. Deregulation of the economy

10. Protection of property rights[90].

During these years, Harvey argues, the United States and the United Kingdom, with their centre-left Third Way politicians Clinton and Blair, had the major role in advocating and spreading neoliberalism both nationally and internationally, putting pressure to the rest of the world: not only to the global South, yet even to Europe and Japan[91]. For example, politician Gerhard Schroder, Chancellor of Germany from 1998 to 2005, contributed in moving his centre-left Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), in a more "market friendly" direction[92]. A further international institutional endorsement to neoliberalization came from the formation, in 1995, of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which replaced the 1948 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Moreover, to a regional level, the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, Mexico, and the United States, and the 1992 Maastricht Treaty in Europe are additional example of the neoliberal institutional adjustment of that decade[93]. Finally, the collapse, in the late 1980s, of the communist economies of Easter Europe, and the Soviet Union in particular, contributed to the advancement of the neoliberal agenda globally.

Another fundamental element in the process of neoliberalization is the role of rolling financial crises, defined by Harvey as "endemic and contagious"[94].

---

[90] *Ivi,* pp. 19-20.
[91] Harvey (2005), p. 93.
[92] Flew (2014), p. 56.
[93] Harvey (2005), p. 93.
[94] *Ivi*, p. 94.

From example, the Mexico debt crisis of the 1980s had global manifestations, as it is graphically visible from this image[95]:

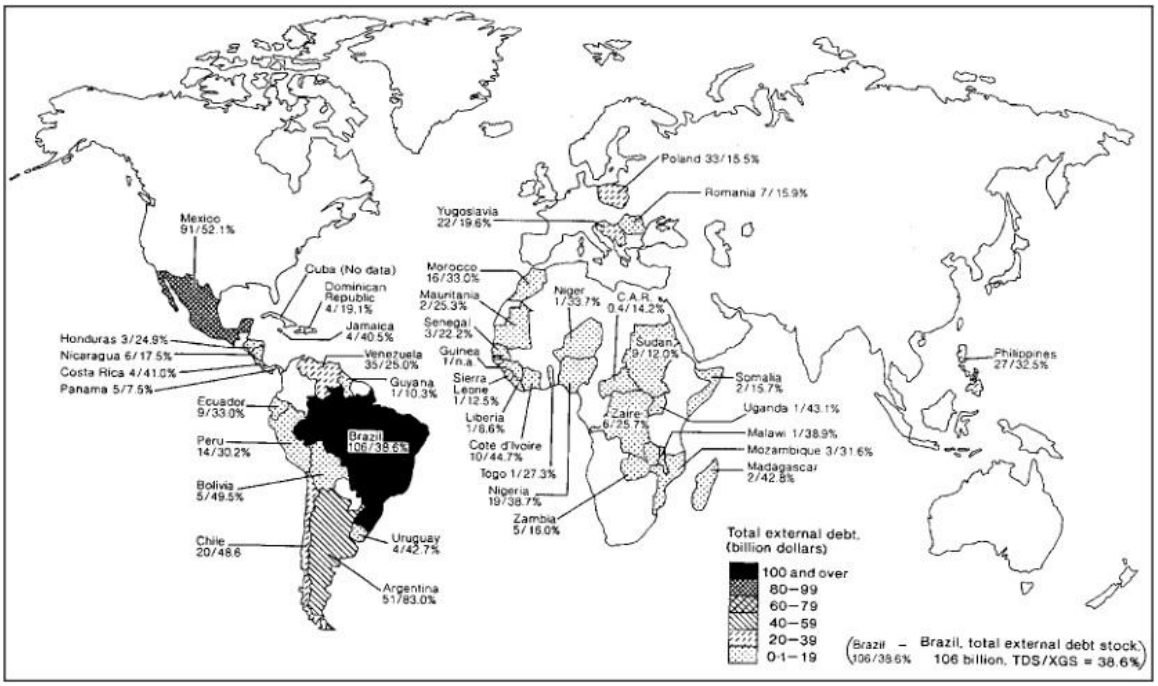

Figure 4. The international debt crisis of 1982–1985[96].

During the 1980s, the reasons for Latin American countries to borrow money heavily from the IMF are to be found, according to neo-Marxist Harry Cleaver, besides "the corrupt practice of skimming personal wealth off the edges of the massive loans and, often, depositing that wealth in foreign bank"[97], in the need for local administrators to finance both short run military repression of local struggles, especially to control the working class; and, in the long run, to foster local industrialization with its considerable infrastructure investments[98]. "In the three largest debtor countries Mexico, Brazil and Argentina such development

[95] *Ibidem*.
[96] S. Corbridge (1993). *Debt and development*. Oxford, Blackwell. Cited in Harvey (2005), p. 95.
[97] H. Cleaver (1989). 'Close the IMF, abolish debt and end development: a class analysis of the international debt crisis'. *Capital & Class*, 13(3), p. 46.
[98] *Ivi*, pp. 22-23.

investment was clearly predicated on the political repression of local struggles, in two cases by military juntas"[99].

The Mexican "Tequila Crisis" of 1995 is another example of contagious crisis, as it spread immediately to Brazil and Argentina with overwhelming effects, yet it also hit Chile, the Philippines, Thailand, and Poland with different intensities[100]. According to Harvey, although the reasons for crises to follow this pattern of negative contamination are difficult to identify, because of the uncertainty of financial markets, it remains true that "unregulated financialization plainly posed a serious danger of contagious crises"[101].

The last example of a contagious financial crisis, with a more extensive effect, is the one that hit East Asia in the late 1990s. This crisis began in Thailand on July 2, 1997, when the collapse of the speculative property market triggered the devaluation of the Thai currency, the *baht*[102]. A well-written account of this financial crisis can be found in Stiglitz's book *Globalization and its Discontents*, where he defines it as one of "the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression", spreading around the entire world[103]. Overnight, the *baht* fell by 25 percent, and immediately afterwards "[c]urrency speculation spread and hit Malaysia, Korea, the Philippines, and Indonesia, and by the end of the year what had started as an exchange rate disaster threatened to take down many of the region's banks, stock markets, and even entire economies"[104]. Far from working out the situation, the IMF and its imperative policies worsened the problem: "in retrospect, it became clear that the IMF policies not only exacerbated the downturns but were partially responsible for the onset: excessively rapid financial and capital market liberalization was probably the single most important cause

---

[99] *Ivi,* p. 23.
[100] Harvey (2005), p. 94.
[101] *Ibidem*.
[102] *Ivi*, p. 96.
[103] J. E. Stiglitz (2002). *Globalization and its Discontents*. New York, W.W. Norton, p. 89.
[104] *Ibidem*.

of the crisis, though mistaken policies on the part of the countries themselves played a role as well"[105].

Harvey's concept of "accumulation by dispossession", presented in detail in a chapter in his *The New Imperialism*[106], is directly linked to the theorization of neoliberal crises presented above. Marx, he argues, have the merit to predict that

> market liberalization—the credo of the liberals and the neo-liberals—will not produce a harmonious state in which everyone is better off. It will instead produce ever greater levels of social inequality (as indeed has been the global trend over the last thirty years of neo-liberalism, particularly within those countries such as Britain and the United States that have most closely hewed to such a political line). It will also, Marx predicts, produce serious and growing instabilities culminating in chronic crises of overaccumulation (of the sort we are now witnessing)[107].

The problem of overaccumulation occurs when reinvestment of capital no longer produces returns. In particular, if a market is overflowed with capital, it occurs a substantial devaluation. "[T]he theory of overaccumulation identifies the lack of opportunities for profitable investment as the fundamental problem"[108]. In this situation, accumulation by dispossession can be seen as a solution to solve this problem, releasing "a set of assets (including labour power) at very low (and in some instances zero) cost. Overaccumulated capital can seize hold of such assets and immediately turn them to profitable use"[109]. Indeed, since 1973, the neoliberal project responded to the problem of overaccumulation

---

[105] *Ivi*, pp. 89-90.
[106] D. Harvey (2003). 'Accumulation by Dispossession' in *The New Imperialism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 137-182.
[107] Harvey (2003), p. 144.
[108] *Ivi*, p. 139.
[109] *Ivi,* p. 149.

privatizing everything[110]. However, this same objective can be reached by devaluating existing capital assets and labour power:

> Devalued capital assets can be bought up at fire-sale prices and profitably recycled back into the circulation of capital by overaccumulated capital. But this requires a prior wave of devaluation, which means a crisis of some kind. *Crises may be orchestrated, managed, and controlled to rationalize the system*. This is often what state-administered austerity programmes, making use of the key levers of interest rates and the credit system, are often all about. Limited crises may be imposed by external force upon one sector or upon a territory or whole territorial complex of capitalist activity. This is what the international financial system (led by the IMF) backed by superior state power (such as that of the United States) is so expert at doing. The result is the periodic creation of a stock of devalued, and in many instances undervalued, assets in some part of the world, which can be put to profitable use by the capital surpluses that lack opportunities elsewhere[111] [the italics is mine].

Robert Wade and Frank Veneroso show how this mechanism works, explaining the East Asia crisis of 1997-1998 cited above:

> Financial crises have always caused transfers of ownership and power to those who keep their own assets intact and who are in a position to create credit, and the Asian crisis is no exception [...] there is no doubt that Western and Japanese corporations are the big winners [...]. The combination of massive devaluations, IMF-pushed financial liberalization, and IMF-facilitated recovery may even precipitate the biggest peacetime transfer of assets from domestic to foreign owners in the past fifty years anywhere in the world, dwarfing the transfers from domestic to US owners in Latin America

[110] *Ivi*, p. 149-150.
[111] *Ivi*, p. 150.

in the 1980s or in Mexico after 1994. One recalls the statement attributed to Andrew Mellon: "In a depression assets return to their rightful owners"[112].

The limits of dominant ideology theories

Other scholars share the neo-Marxist account of neoliberalism that I have presented hitherto, referring mainly to David Harvey, for example Henk Overbeek and Bastiaan Van Apeldoorn[113], and the above-cited Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy[114] among others. In general, for a left perspective of neoliberalism, the book edited by Alfredo Saad-Filho and Deborah Johnston, *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader*[115], remains fundamental; it contains thirty essays by different theorists, many of them linked to Marxism (Dae-oup Chang, Simon Clarke, Gérard Duménil, Dominique Lévy, John Milio, Ronaldo Munck, Alfredo Saad-Filho among others).

To recapitulate, for theorists of this kind of approach, neoliberalism is essentially an *economic discourse*[116]. From this standpoint, neoliberalism represents the dominant political ideology of global capitalism, associated with "economic globalization and the rise of financial capitalism"[117]. In Overbeek and Van Apeldoorn's terms, the essence of neoliberal policies is "a political project aimed to restore capitalist class power in the aftermath of the economic and social crises of the 1970s"[118], where the role of the state, according to Harvey, "is to

---

[112] R. Wade and F. Veneroso (1998). 'The Asian Crisis: The High Debt Model versus the Wall Street-Treasury-IMF Complex'. New Left Review, 228, pp. 3-23. Cited in Harvey (2003), pp. 150-151.
[113] H. Overbeek and B. Van Apeldoorn (2012). *Neoliberalism in Crisis*. Chichester, Palgrave Macmillan.
[114] G. Dume´nil and D. Lévy (2011), *The Crisis Of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.
[115] A. Saad-Filho and D. Johnston (2005). *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader*. London, Pluto Press.
[116] Flew (2014), p. 56.
[117] *Ibidem.*
[118] Overbeek and Van Apeldoorn (2012), p. 5. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 56.

create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such [neoliberal] practices"[119].

According to the neo-Marxist perspective, neoliberalism emerged as a market-based set of solutions to cope with new economic problems. Keynesian economics dominated in academic institutions as the standard economic model from the 1930s (from the later part of the Great Depression) to the 1970s (during the post-war economic boom), yet it started to lose influence because of the emergence of new problems, "such as simultaneous price inflation and rising unemployment"[120], linked to the oil shock and the 1973-75 recession. This kind of issues were not conceived in standard Keynesian models, paving the way for new ideas, conceptions and solutions linked to neoliberalism: "a complex fusion of monetarism (Friedman), rational expectations (Robert Lucas), public choice (James Buchanan, and Gordon Tullock), and the less respectable but by no means uninfluential 'supply-side' ideas of Arthur Laffer, who went so far as to suggest that the incentive effects of tax cuts would so increase economic activity as to automatically increase tax revenues (Reagan was enamoured of this idea)"[121]. Finally, during this phase, the ideas of Austrian economists Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek circulated extensively. As an example, in 1975, as soon as Thatcher defeated Ted Heath for the leadership of the Conservative Party, she established, with her closest colleagues, a "Hayekian Centre for Policy Studies", indicating clearly the neoliberal turn of her economic policy agenda[122].

According to Harvey, the shared feature of the variety of positions cited above was that "government intervention was the problem rather than the solution, and that 'a stable monetary policy, plus radical tax cuts in the top

[119] Harvey (2005), p. 2. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 56.
[120] Flew (2014), p. 56.
[121] Harvey (2005), p. 54.
[122] D. Stedman Jones (2012). 'The Heath Interregnum and the Neoliberal Alternative' in *Masters of the universe: Hayek, Friedman and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics* [eBook]. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

brackets, would produce a healthier economy' by getting the incentives for entrepreneurial activity aligned correctly"[123].

This set of new neoliberal ideas gained legitimacy to an international level as a result of their academic recognition by several economic departments of leading universities; and thanks to the institutional recognition of influential conservative think tanks, such as the Adam Smith Institute or the Institute for Economic Affairs in the United Kingdom, and the American Enterprise Institute or the Heritage Foundation in the United States[124].

The analysis of neoliberalism developed from neo-Marxists such as Harvey, described above in outline, is a form of "*dominant ideology* theory"[125]. These theories have a theoretical foundation in Marx's work, and in particular in the economic determinism that can be read, for example, in *The German Ideology*: "[t]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force"[126]. Or, to rephrase, as Marx stated in another occasion,

> [t]he totality of [the] relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. *The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life*[127] [the italics is mine].

---

[123] Harvey (2005), p. 54. Cited in Flew, pp. 56-57.
[124] Flew, p. 57.
[125] *Ibidem*.
[126] K. Marx and F. Engels (1998). *The German Ideology: including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*. New York, Prometheus Books, p. 67.
[127] K. Marx (1977). 'Preface' in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, accessed 5 November 2015, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm..

Harvey describes the rise and consolidation of the neoliberal hegemony as a process put in place by a resurgent ruling class, imposing progressively and globally the economic ideology through the dominion and control of cultural and state institutions and private associations, producing simultaneously popular consent[128]. As he asserts:

> Powerful ideological influences circulated through the corporations, the media, and the numerous institutions that constitute civil society – such as the universities, schools, churches, and professional associations. The 'long march' of neo liberal ideas through these institutions that Hayek had envisaged back in 1947, the organization of think-tanks (with corporate backing and funding), the capture of certain segments of the media, and the conversion of many intellectuals to neoliberal ways of thinking, created a climate of opinion in support of neoliberalism as the exclusive guarantor of freedom. These movements were later consolidated through the capture of political parties and, ultimately, state power[129].

A variety of problems is associated with dominant ideology theories of the kind presented above. Flew highlights three of these criticisms[130]. First, *functionalism*, or the tendency of these theorizations to reduce every aspect of a society, from education to international economic agreements, to a single causal element. This entails a circular reasoning, which is to say that a single causal factor, the economic ideology imposed by the ruling class, is structuring the neoliberal society that inherently have a neoliberal organization. Or, to say it in Nonini's terms: "flexible capitalism dictates its own conditions of existence to the political systems of the nation-states it is organized within"[131].

---

[128] Flew (2014), p. 57.
[129] Harvey (2005), p. 40.
[130] Flew (2014), p. 58.
[131] Nonini (2008), p. 150. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 58.

Second, *instrumentalism,* or the tendency to understate the role of government institutions, which seem to be reduced to a puppet used by the elites to dictate their class strategies. According to this view, to say it with Patrick Dunleavy and Brendan O'Leary, state agencies and policy makers are "simply functionaries who make policy according to the rational interests of the capitalist class"[132].

A final problem is associated with the question whether the process of the state becoming "a passive mechanism controlled from outside of the formal political sphere"[133] is a *cipher model of the state*. Therefore, the question is whether the neoliberal agenda is indeed being designed outside the state agencies assigned to that role, as the political struggle is external and the institutions are not capable of shaping and influencing the economic and political outcomes[134].

[132] P. Dunleavy and B. O'Leary (1987). *Theories of the State: the Politics of Liberal Democracy*. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education, p. 239. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 58.
[133] Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987), p. 327. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 58.
[134] Flew (2014), pp. 58-59.

1.1.5 Neoliberalism as a new form of governmentality

A Marxist-Foucauldian perspective?

As I tried to make clear during my reasoning, the interpretation of neoliberalism as the dominant economic ideology of global capitalism, as presented by authors such as Harvey, Duménil and Lévy, and Overbeek and Van Apeldoorn is the most interesting analysis of neoliberalism presented so far in this dissertation. However, one of the major issue with these neo-Marxist accounts of neoliberalism, besides the three critical points just outlined above, is that they understand it mainly – if not *only* – as an *economic ideology*.

Of course, I am not arguing that it is false that, as Klein pointed out, neoliberal policies have been implemented with extensive use of force and violence; nor I am denying that, as Harvey explained, international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank forced government in need for loans to accept particular conditions and implement neoliberal policies. However, *I am suggesting that neo-Marxist interpretations do not always understand the peculiarity of neoliberalism*. As Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval pointed out, these interpretations, even if "updated", fail to explain the novelty of neoliberalism, for it "employs unprecedented techniques of power over conduct and subjectivities"[135]. Thus, how is it possible to fill this deficiency?

A number of scholars have tried to adopt a Foucauldian perspective to understand neoliberalism more appropriately. However, some of these accounts, such as the works of Wendy Brown (for example *Neo-liberalism and the end of*

[135] Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 12.

liberal democracy[136] or *American nightmare: Neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism, and de-democratization*[137]), Jodi Dean (for example *Enjoying neoliberalism*[138]) and Toby Miller (in particular his review of *The Birth of Biopolitics*[139]), despite their intentions, do not utterly grasp the novelty of Foucault's ideas, remaining instead tied to a conventional neo-Marxist dominant ideology theory[140]. The result, Barnett observes, is a "trouble-free amalgamation of Foucault's ideas into the Marxist narrative of 'neoliberalism'", which produces a "simplistic image of the world divided between the forces of hegemony and the spirits of subversion"[141].

In particular, Brown links neoliberalism to "a radically free market: maximized competition and free trade achieved through economic de-regulation [...] and a range of monetary and social policies favorable to business and indifferent toward poverty, social deracination, cultural decimation, long term resource depletion and environmental destruction"[142]. In this context, "the state itself must construct and construe itself in market terms, as well as develop policies and promulgate a political culture that figures citizens exhaustively as rational economic actors in every sphere of life"[143].

On the other hand, Dean takes advantage of Foucault's work to assert that neoliberalism "'inverts the early [liberal] model of the state as a limiting, external principle supervising the market to make the market form itself the regulative

---

[136] W. Brown (2003). 'Neo-Liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy'. *Theory & Event*, 7(1), pp. 1–29.
[137] W. Brown (2006). 'American nightmare: Neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism, and de-democratization'. *Political Theory*, 34(6), pp. 690–714.
[138] J. Dean (2008). 'Enjoying neoliberalism'. *Cultural Politics,* 4(1), pp. 47–72.
[139] T. Miller (2010). 'Michel Foucault, The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978–79'. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 16(1), pp. 56–57.
[140] Flew (2014), p. 60.
[141] C. Barnett (2005). 'The consolations of 'neoliberalism''. *Geoforum*, 36(1), p. 10.
[142] Brown (2003), p. 1. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 59.
[143] Brown (2006), p. 694. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 59.

principle underlying the state, [thereby] reformatting social and political life in terms of its ideal of competition within markets"[144].

Finally, in his review of *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Miller argues that Foucault highlighted that the "grand contradiction of neo-liberalism was its passion for intervention in the name of non-intervention [...] hailing freedom as a natural basis for life that could only function with the heavy hand of policing by government to administer property relations"[145].

Barnett criticizes this kind of approaches, as he argues that "the Marxist and Foucauldian approaches are not necessarily as easily reconciled as it might seem", because "they imply different models of the nature of explanatory concepts; different models of causality and determination; different models of social relations and agency; and different normative understandings of political power"[146]. In particular, whenever Foucault's arguments are instrumentalized to strengthen the weaker points of neo-Marxist narratives, they lose their explanatory potential.

In these theorizations, Foucault is instrumentalized in two ways. First, when neoliberalism is understood as "discourse", that is to say as an "institutionally located and regulative usage of ideas and concepts to shape pictures of reality"[147]. This meaning is instrumental as "discourse", here, is employed as a synonym for "ideology", that is to say "to refer to a set of imaginary-representative tools deployed by specific groups in pursuit of their interest in augmenting their own power"[148].

The second manner of instrumentalization occurs when hegemonic theories of neoliberalism need an explanation of the behavior of subjects at the level of everyday life. To do so, these narratives extend "the range of activities that

---

144 Dean (2008), p. 48-49. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 60.
145 Miller (2010), p. 56. Cited in Flew (2014), p. 60.
146 Barnett (2005), p. 8.
147 *Ivi,* p. 9.
148 *Ibidem.*

are commodified, commercialized and marketized", implying "that subjectivities have to be re-fitted as active consumers, entrepreneurial subjects, participants"; thus the concept of "governmentality" is here employed "to explain how broad macro-structural shifts from state regulation to market regulation are modulated with the micro-contexts of everyday routines"[149].

As Flew pointed out, these scholars link their supposed Foucauldian perspective to a number of ideas Foucault many a time dissociate his work from: "a top-down analysis of power; a state that is able to act on society as a relatively unified and coherent institutional entity; and a dominant ideology that operates as a form of social control and 'social glue', binding the masses to elite political-economic projects"[150]. Contrariwise, the scholarly literature generally agree on the fact that Foucault's analysis of power underlines that: "*power is productive and not simply repressive; power is not exercised primarily through domination but rather with the consent of the governed; and power is not the opposite of freedom*"[151].

Michel Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics*

I think that, to avoid any kind of instrumentalization and grasp the authentic meaning of Michel Foucault's work, it is necessary to return to study what he really said on this topic. At the *Collège de France*, he taught a course on "The History of Systems of Thought" from 1971 until his death, in 1984[152]. In particular, in the course delivered as early as 1979, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault dealt with the analysis of two forms of neoliberalism: the German post-War liberalism (*ordoliberalism*) and the US liberalism of the Chicago School.

[149] *Ibidem*.
[150] Flew (2014), p. 60.
[151] *Ibidem*.
[152] M. Foucault and M. Senellart (2008). *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*. Trans. G. Burchell, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, p. XIV.

These ideas represent a pioneering research that Foucault did not have the time to fully elaborate and publish in a book, because of his premature death. In spite of this, these lectures are widely recognized as an outstanding contribution to the understanding of neoliberalism and its unique features.

Michel Foucault has also the merit to anticipate of about twenty years an important debate, still ongoing, with his precocious interest in liberalism and neoliberalism. Indeed, during the 1970s, scholars just started to show their concerns about the ideas of the German ordoliberal economists and the American theorists of the Chicago school. However, since the 2000s, as noted above, the literature on the analysis and the criticism of neoliberalism has spread immensely, so that this term is now used in so many ways that it is not always easy to situate an author in the theoretical debate[153].

While it is generally true that Foucault did not deal with contemporary developments because of his interest in researching concrete topics (madness, imprisonment, sexuality etc.) in their nexus from ancient Greece to the nineteenth century, his interest in neoliberalism is an exception[154]. The lectures he devoted to this topic, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, are peculiar because of an unusual analysis focused on the late-twentieth century.

Flew suggests to read *The Birth of Biopolitics* as a book composed of five parts[155]. The chapters 1–3[156] identify the first part, where Foucault study the origins, in the eighteenth century, of liberalism as an art of government, he analyses its relationship with political economy and public law and the establishment of a questionable relationship between liberalism and freedom. The second part, chapters 4–6[157], focuses on German *ordoliberalism*, which is

[153] T. Flew (2012). 'Michel Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics* and Contemporary Neo-Liberalism Debates'. *Thesis Eleven,* 108(1), p. 47.
[154] J. Read (2009). 'A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity'. *Foucault Studies*, 6, p. 27.
[155] Flew (2012), pp. 47-48
[156] Foucault (2008), pp. 1-73.
[157] *Ivi*, pp. 75-157.

described both as a complex and many-sided set of ideas and theories, and as the ideology that characterized the policies of the post-1945 West Germany. The third part consists of chapters 7–8[158], where Foucault try to identify all the implications of neoliberalism, drawing from the works of Karl Marx, Max Weber and Joseph Schumpeter. The chapters 9–10[159] are the fourth part, where the French philosopher studies the American neoliberalism and its economic model applied to non-economic fields, namely human capital theory, marriage, the education of children and criminology. In the final part, chapters 11–12[160], Foucault returns to the notion of *homo œconomicus*, the economic subject, and he analyses the "civil society and its relationship to both government and economy, and the distinctiveness of liberalism as against other governmental rationalities"[161].

It is clear from this brief overview how multifaceted is the Foucault's analysis of liberalism and neoliberalism. Undoubtedly, one of the most interesting and original aspects of this work is his characterization of *homo œconomicus*, the neoliberal subject. Indeed, Foucault stated that the objective of his research was that of creating "a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects"[162]. I will return to this important point at a later stage.

Before continuing, it is necessary to consider how Foucault framed his reasoning. At the end of the first lecture of *The Birth of Bio-Politics* (10 January 1979), Foucault explains his fundamental research method. As for his previous works on "madness, disease, delinquency and sexuality"[163], his objective is that of showing how a particular practice (or set of practices) became real, from

---

[158] *Ivi,* pp. 159-213.
[159] *Ivi,* pp. 215-265.
[160] *Ivi,* pp. 267-316.
[161] Flew (2012), p. 48.
[162] M. Foucault (1983). 'The Subject and Power'. In H. L. Dreyfus, P. Rabinow and M. Foucault. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, p. 208.
[163] Foucault (2008), p. 19.

something that did not exist[164]. According to Foucault, the question is not how politics or the economy, understood as errors or illusions, were born, yet rather it is a question of understanding how a regime of truth (which is not an error[165]) became real and imposed itself, as a set of real practices, in the reality, in the domain of the factual world[166]. Thus, the point of his research "is to show how the coupling of a set of practices and a regime of truth form an apparatus (*dispositif*) of knowledge-power that effectively marks out in reality that which does not exist and legitimately submits it to the division between true and false"[167].

It might be useful to spend some words on the concept of "*veridicition*", which is fundamental in all Foucault's argumentations. His point is that it is not particularly relevant to determine whether someone said something true or false, right or wrong, in a particular moment of history. It is not politically interesting nor relevant to assert, for example, that doctors said many stupid things about sex and madness in the nineteenth century. Rather, "what is currently politically important is to determine the regime of veridiction established at a given moment", which enabled, for example, these doctors "to say and assert a number of things as truths that it turns out we now know were perhaps not true at all"[168]. It is only in this sense that historical analysis, according to Foucault, has political implications.

---

[164] *Ibidem*.

[165] "Obviously, a history of truth should not be understood in the sense of a reconstruction of the genesis of the true through the elimination or rectification of errors; nor a history of the true which would constitute a historical succession of rationalities established through the rectification or elimination of ideologies. Nor would this history of truth be the description of insular and autonomous systems of truth. It would involve the genealogy of regimes of veridiction, that is to say, the constitution of a particular right (*droit*) of truth on the basis of a legal situation, the law (*droit*) and truth relationship finding its privileged expression in discourse, the discourse in which law is formulated and in which what can be true or false is formulated; the regime of veridiction, in fact, is not a law (*loi*) of truth, [but] the set of rules enabling one to establish which statements in a given discourse can be described as true or false". Foucault (2008), p. 35.

[166] *Ivi, p. 19.*

[167] *Ibidem*.

[168] *Ivi*, p. 36.

In the lectures of the previous academic year (1977-78), *Security, Territory, Population,* Foucault studied the historical emergence of *raison d'État*[169], which is also a major starting point of the argumentations presented in *The Birth of Bio-Politics*. *Raison d'État* is defined as the set of practices "between a state presented as given and a state presented as having to be constructed and built"[170]. Therefore, "[t]o govern according to the principle of *raison d'État* is to arrange things so that the state becomes sturdy and permanent, so that it becomes wealthy, and so that it becomes strong in the face of everything that may destroy it"[171]. In order to do so, the government has to adopt the principle of *mercantilism*, which is to say: "first, the state must enrich itself through monetary accumulation; second, it must strengthen itself by increasing population; and third, it must exist and maintain itself in a state of permanent competition with foreign powers"[172]. Further, the internal management of the government according to *raison d'État* is *police*, namely "the unlimited regulation of the country according to the model of a tight-knit urban organization"[173]. Finally, there is the strengthening of a permanent army and a permanent diplomatic apparatus, with the aim of maintaining an *equilibrium* between European states without the risk of "the production of imperial types of unification"[174]. That is to say, the theory of European balance: each state has to recognize its limits in relations to neighbor countries, without for that reason being inferior to these countries, simultaneously ensuring its independence and limiting its objectives[175].

---

[169] M. Foucault and M. Senellart (2007). *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78*. Trans. G. Burchell, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
[170] Foucault (2008), p. 4.
[171] *Ibidem*.
[172] *Ivi,* p. 5.
[173] *Ibidem*.
[174] *Ibidem*.
[175] *Ivi,* p. 6.

Around the middle of the eighteenth century it emerged a new *de facto* limitation to the way of governing described above (*raison d'État*). This does not emerge in direct opposition to *raison d'État*, but rather as a way to achieve more efficiently the aims associated with this way of governing: policy, security, and wealth creation. As Foucault explains: "a government that ignores this limitation will not be an illegitimate, usurping government, but simply a clumsy, inadequate government that does not do the proper thing"[176].

It is during the second half of the eighteenth century that it emerged this new art of government, *liberalism*, characterized by a series of mechanisms that served to "limit the exercise of government power internally"[177]. In particular, the question posed by liberalism is that of "the frugality of government", which represents the fundamental problem of political thought starting from the end of the eighteenth century, and nowadays more than ever[178].

According to Foucault, starting from the Middle Age, and throughout the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, the market was essentially "a site of justice", in the sense that it was overflowed with strict controls and regulations[179]. For example, there were rules as far as "the objects brought to market [were concerned], their type of manufacture, their origin, the duties to be paid, the procedures of sale, and, of course, the prices fixed"[180]. In particular, the fixed price had to be at the same time a just prince, in the sense that was fair both for the merchant (as a consequence of the amount of work needed to produce it, for example) and for the client (according to his or her needs and possibilities). Because of this concern about the possibilities for the poorest people to buy, at the very least, basic products such as food, the market was not a simple site of justice, yet a site of *distributive* justice. Therefore, an essential feature of the

[176] *Ivi,* p. 10.
[177] *Ivi*, p. 27.
[178] *Ivi,* p. 29.
[179] *Ivi*, p. 30.
[180] *Ibidem.*

market with all its strict regulations was not that of assuring "the truth of prices", yet rather to avoid any kind of fraud. For all these reasons (regulations, just price, sanction of fraud), "the market was a site of jurisdiction"[181].

Contrariwise, starting from the eighteenth century, because of the developments of the economic theory ("the theory constructed in the discourse of the *économistes* and formed in their brains"[182]), the market became a site of "truth", a site of veridiction. Indeed, the market started to appear as something that follow "natural" and spontaneous mechanisms, and if one let these mechanisms work according to their "natural truth", they will deliver a price that "adequately express the relationship [...] between the cost of production and the extent of demand"[183]: the *true* price. Simultaneously, the market lost in this transfiguration any significance of justice and jurisdiction. Because of its natural power to generate true prices, the market became the site of truth, *a site of veridiction*. "[T]he natural mechanism of the market and the formation of a natural price [...] enables us to falsify and verify governmental practice when [...] we examine what government does, the measures it takes, and the rules it imposes"[184]. In this sense, a good government "has to function according to truth"[185]. According to Foucault, therefore, political economy is paramount because it shows governments where they have to "find the principle of truth of its own governmental practice"[186].

The understanding of the market "as a mechanism of exchange and a site of veridiction regarding the relationship between value and price"[187] is directly associated with what Foucault calls a governmental reason or, more precisely, the *new governmental reason* associated with liberalism. Thus, from the side of

---

[181] *Ivi*, p. 31.
[182] *Ibidem*.
[183] *Ibidem*.
[184] *Ivi*, p. 32.
[185] *Ibidem*.
[186] *Ibidem*.
[187] *Ivi*, p. 44.

market, the value exchange is the principle of reference, and, from the side of public authorities, the principle to guide their interventions is that of *utility*. "Exchange for wealth and utility for the public authorities: this is how governmental reason articulates the fundamental principle of its self-limitation"[188]. The general category common to both principles (exchange and utility) is that of *interest*. Therefore, according to Foucault, the new governmental reason "is something that works with interests"[189]. A paramount question is associated whit this liberal art of government: "[w]hat is the utility value of government and all actions of government in a society where exchange determines the true value of things?"[190].

Liberalism is a governmentality that is "consumer of freedom"[191]. This is because it needs a number of freedoms to exist and work: "freedom of the market, freedom to buy and sell, the free exercise of property rights, freedom of discussion, possible freedom of expression, and so on"[192]. Therefore, this new governmental reason must both produce freedom and organize it. To rephrase, it formulates this new sort of imperative: "I am going to produce what you need to be free"[193]. Liberalism is not the governmentality that accepts freedom as a given: "[f]reedom is something which is constantly produced. Liberalism is not acceptance of freedom; it proposes to manufacture it constantly, to arouse it and produce it, with [the system] of constraints and the problems of cost raised by this production"[194].

It emerges at this point a problem of *security*, the principle to evaluate the costs of this freedom. That is to say, the liberal art of government has to determine to which extent the interests of the single person are not a danger for

[188] *Ibidem*.
[189] *Ibidem*.
[190] *Ivi,* p. 46.
[191] *Ivi,* p. 63
[192] *Ibidem*.
[193] *Ibidem*.
[194] *Ivi*, p. 65.

the interests of all. As Foucault puts it, "[t]he problem of security is the protection of the collective interest against individual interests" and, vice versa, "individual interests have to be protected against everything that could be seen as an encroachment of the collective interest"[195].

According to Foucault, "[t]he interplay of freedom and security is not a paradox to be escaped but the very definition of liberalism"[196]. The tension between freedom and security characterizes the economy of power specific to liberalism and entails a series of paramount consequences. First, individuals feel to be exposed to danger, so much that the motto of liberalism become "[l]ive dangerously"[197]. In the nineteenth century, indeed, there is a new education and political culture of danger associated with everyday life of individuals, perpetually and systematically "brought to life, reactualized, and circulated"[198]. Foucault cites several examples of this new political culture of danger: the establishment of savings banks as a preventive remedy for the shortsightedness of the lower classes (the first of these banks was founded in Paris in 1818[199]), the emergence of detective fiction and crime journalism, the campaigns about disease and hygiene, and the concerns about the "abnormal" and any form of degenerations[200].

Second, the liberal art of government exceptionally extends the procedures of control, constraint, and coercion as a counterweight to individual freedoms. In particular, Foucault cites Bentham's Panopticon, presented by the end of the eighteenth century, as the "general political formula that characterizes [this] type of government"[201]. The Panopticon is presented as a procedure for all kind of institutions, from schools to prisons, "which would enable one to

---

[195] *Ibidem*.
[196] C. Hardin (2012). 'Finding The 'Neo' In Neoliberalism'. *Cultural Studies*, 28(2), p. 205.
[197] Foucault (2008), p. 66.
[198] *Ibidem*.
[199] *Ivi*, p. 72.
[200] *Ivi*, p. 66.
[201] *Ivi*, p. 67.

supervise the conduct of individuals while increasing the profitability and productivity of their activity"[202]. In practice, with the Panopticon formula, the simple supervision is sufficient to let liberal mechanisms to work "naturally". The government has to intervene only when "something is not happening according to the general mechanics of behavior, exchange, and economic life"[203].

The third consequence is a step beyond panopticism (in which control is the counterweight to freedom), that is to say the emergence of mechanisms with the function "of introducing additional freedom through additional control and intervention"[204]. In these mechanisms, control is not simply necessary as a counterpart, yet it becomes the main impulse of freedom. As an example, Foucault cites the New Deal designed by Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, a welfare policy developed in response to the Great Depression with a focus on "Relief, Recovery, and Reform". The New Deal, Foucault explains, "was a way of guaranteeing and producing more freedom in a dangerous situation of unemployment: freedom to work, freedom of consumption, political freedom, and so on". Yet the price of this "series of artificial, [...] direct economic interventions in the market represented by the basic Welfare measures [...] were described as being in themselves threats of a new despotism"[205]. Here, one can note that "democratic freedoms are only guaranteed by an economic interventionism which is denounced as a threat to freedom". In this case, Foucault states that liberalism "is the victim from within [of] what could be called crises of governmentality"[206].

Finally, Foucault studies whether another type of crisis of liberalism can "be due to the inflation of the compensatory mechanisms of freedom"[207]. In

[202] *Ibidem.*
[203] *Ibidem.*
[204] *Ibidem.*
[205] *Ivi*, p. 68.
[206] *Ibidem.*
[207] *Ibidem.*

particular, he argues that the Keynesian interventionist policies put in place before and after Second World War (in 1930 and 1960, respectively) "to avoid the reduction of freedom that would be entailed by transition to socialism, fascism, or National Socialism"[208] are, in fact, the starting point for the critical analysis advanced by the German *ordoliberals* of the Freiburg School. Indeed, according to them, "these mechanisms of [Keynesian] economic intervention surreptitiously introduce [...] modes of action which are as harmful to freedom as the visible and manifest political forms one wants to avoid"[209]. The same can be said for the re-evaluations of Keynesianism by the American neoliberals contemporary to Foucault.

To conclude, Foucault notes that it is true that throughout the eighteenth century there were several and consistent crises of capitalism. However, these cannot be reduced nor identified with the crises of liberalism described above. Similarly, one cannot argue that these crises of liberalism are simply projection of the crises of capitalism in the political sphere. Rather, more precisely, these are crises "of the general apparatus (*dispositif*) of [the] governmentality"[210] of liberalism.

German ordoliberalism

So far, I have explained what Foucault meant by liberalism, yet my dissertation focus on *neo*liberalism. I chose to frame this section in this way as Foucault starts his argumentation from liberalism and afterwards turn to the second half of the twentieth century and the rise of neoliberalism, often referring to the background of his reasoning. As I anticipated above, according to Foucault the German *ordoliberalism* (from the name of the academic journal *Ordo*) of the

[208] *Ivi*, p. 69.
[209] *Ibidem.*
[210] *Ivi*, p. 70.

1940s and the 1950s and the more recent American neoliberalism of the Chicago school are re-evaluations of the classical liberalism that was born in the late eighteenth century.

These two forms of neoliberalism share a number of features: first, the common enemy, namely Keynesianism. Second, their objects of criticism, "the state-controlled economy, planning, and state interventionism on precisely those overall quantities to which Keynes attached such theoretical and especially practical importance"[211]. Third, a common theoretical framework represented by the economists of the Austrian school, such as Ludwig Edler von Mises (1881–1973), who wrote *Die Gemeinwirtschaft: Untersuchungen über den Sozialismus*[212], in which he demonstrates that "in the absence of a market for factors of production these could not be rationally allocated to industrial plants and that, in consequence, a centrally directed economy could not function"[213]; and Friedrich von Hayek (1899–1992), who wrote *Der Weg zur Knechtschaft*[214], in which he puts on guard "of the danger of tyranny that inevitably results from government control of economic decision-making through central planning"[215].

According to Foucault, the German ordoliberal perspective develops a new point of view on reality that is not a simple economic conception, yet it has also social and political implications. This analytical perspective interprets the historical reality in a peculiar way, for example as far as the rise of Nazism is concerned. Generally, Nazism is understood as a reaction to the needs of capitalism. On the contrary, ordoliberals understand the emergence of Nazism as the result of the lack of liberal practices. That is to say, there was not a dichotomy

---

[211] *Ivi,* p. 79.
[212] L. von Mises (1951). *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
[213] Foucault (2008), p. 96.
[214] F. A. von Hayek (1944). *The Road to Serfdom*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
[215] R. M. Ebeling (1999). 'Friedrich A. Hayek: A Centenary Appreciation', *The Freeman*, 49 (5).

between capitalism and socialism, yet rather between liberalism and different forms of economic interventions, namely Kantianism and real socialism.

As Foucault puts it,

> what Nazism finally contributed was the strict coalescence of these different elements, that is to say, the organization of an economic system in which protectionist economics, the economics of state aid, the planned economy, and Keynesian economics formed a firmly secured whole in which the different parts were bound together by the economic administration that was set up[216].

Therefore,

> [t]he real problem was between a liberal politics and any other form whatsoever of economic interventionism, whether it takes the relatively mild form of Keynesianism or the drastic form of an autarchic plan like that of Germany. So we have an invariant that could be called [...] the anti-liberal invariant, which possesses its own logic and internal necessity[217].

Ordoliberalism reframed the question of liberalism, which was that of delimiting a free market space within the framework of a given political structure. In other words, neoliberals tried to organize the political power with the logics and the principles of the free market economy.

Indeed, one of the major differences between liberalism and neoliberalism (or ordoliberalism) consist in the manner of understanding economic activities. Classical liberalism, and in particular the theory of Adam Smith based on exchange, "naturalized the market as a system with its own rationality, its own interest, and its own specific efficiency, arguing ultimately for

[216] Foucault (2008), p. 109.
[217] *Ivi*, p. 111.

its superior efficiency as a distributor of goods and services"[218]. Foucault underlines the fact that the market, operating in this way and taking advantage of the powerful right of private property, managed to determine its own autonomy from the state power. In this way, the economic activities based on exchange become the general pattern of society, that is to say the matrix of social and political relations[219]. It is important to stress the fact that in liberalism the market, which is based on exchange, is a *natural* fact. As Foucault puts it: "what we see appearing in the middle of the eighteenth century really is a naturalism much more than a liberalism"[220].

On the contrary, the economic activities of *neo*liberalism are not based on mere exchange, yet they are based on *competition*, which is precisely its element of novelty. In opposition to mere exchange, competition "is absolutely not a given of nature. [Yet it] has an internal logic; it has its own structure. Its effects are only produced if this logic is respected. It is, as it were, a formal game between inequalities; it is not a natural game between individuals and behaviors"[221]. Therefore, the shift from liberalism to neoliberalism is precisely that of changing the matrix of social relations from exchange to competition. As Foucault explains, "for the neo-liberals, the most important thing about the market is not exchange, that kind of original and fictional situation imagined by eighteenth century liberal economists. The essential thing of the market [...] is competition"[222].

In order to achieve a regime of competition one need a direct and constant intervention of the state. "Neoliberalism should not therefore be identified with *laissez-faire*, but rather with permanent vigilance, activity, and

[218] Read (2009), p. 27.
[219] *Ibidem*.
[220] Foucault (2008), p. 62.
[221] *Ivi*, p. 120.
[222] *Ivi*, p. 118.

intervention”[223]. For example, the neoliberal government has to pay attention to the situation of the market, limiting inflation.

As far as the social sphere is concerned, neoliberal interventionism shifts from the paradigm of socialism, in which there were redistributive, welfare and assistance policies to the benefit of the individual, to the pattern of maximizing the creation of the conditions of economic enhancement of the individual, without the state directly taking care of her/him. As Foucault puts it, the German “individual social policy” “does not involve providing individuals with a social cover for risks, but according everyone a sort of economic space within which they can take on and confront risks”[224]. In other words, it is not a question of trading off market freedoms with individual economic support borne by the state, yet rather the objective is that of reducing the anticompetitive mechanisms of society. “Instead of lessening the anti-social consequences of competition, [ordoliberals] had to block the anti-competitive mechanisms which society can spawn”[225].

Two fundamental aspects of the ordoliberal social policy are the universalization of the entrepreneurial form and the redefinition of law[226]. First, in order to achieve the universalization of the entrepreneurial form it is necessary to reframe the social structure to the model of the enterprise. Far from aiming to distributive equality, the entrepreneurial model of this governmentality says “[i]nequality [...] is the same for all”[227]. As for the enterprise, the regulatory principle of the society is that of competition. “This means that what is sought is not a society subject to the commodity-effect, but a society subject to the dynamic of competition. Not a supermarket society, but an enterprise society”[228]. This process has important implications as far as the dimension of the individual

[223] *Ivi*, p. 132.
[224] *Ivi*, p. 144.
[225] T. Lemke (2001). ‘The Birth of Bio-Politics': Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège de France on Neo-Liberal Governmentality’. *Economy and Society,* 30(2), p. 195.
[226] *Ibidem*.
[227] Foucault (2008), p. 143.
[228] *Ivi,* p. 147.

subjectivity is concerned, as "[t]he *homo œconomicus* sought after is not the man of exchange or man the consumer; he is the man of enterprise and production"[229]. I will return afterwards to this paramount point.

Second, the redefinition of law and of the juridical institutions. For the ordoliberals "the juridical is clearly not part of the superstructure"[230], to wit they do not intend law as an instrument for the economy. Rather, the juridical domain shapes the economic, "and the economic would not be what it is without the juridical"[231]. That is to say, now it is possible to identify an economic-juridical order. Indeed, "the economic must be considered as a set of regulated activities from the very beginning: [...] with rules of completely different levels, forms, origins, dates, and chronologies; rules which may comprise a social habitus, a religious prescription, an ethics, a corporative regulation, and also a law"[232].

Historically, this means that capitalism is not simply an economic reality that emerges as a process against the law. "The history of capitalism can only be an economic-institutional history"[233]. From a political standpoint, there is at stake the survival of capitalism. From this perspective, it does not make much sense to refer to capitalism as the logic of capital and its accumulation, yet rather, "historically, we have a capitalism with its singularity, but which, in virtue of this very singularity, may give rise [...] to economic-institutional transformations, which open up a field of possibilities for it"[234]. If one understands capitalism as a *single* capitalism, which is to say as a mere process of accumulation that follows the logic of capital, then, Foucault argues, this type of capitalism is to come to an end before long. Yet, on the other perspective, "you have an historical singularity of an economic-institutional figure before which a field of possibilities opens

[229] *Ibidem*.
[230] *Ivi,* p. 162.
[231] *Ivi,* p. 163.
[232] *Ibidem*.
[233] *Ivi,* p. 164.
[234] *Ivi,* p. 165.

up”[235]. The problem of ordoliberals was exactly that of showing “that capitalism was still possible and could survive if a new form was invented for it”[236]. It is no coincidence that, for the sake of survival of capitalism, *ordoliberals legitimated the state through its means of contribution to the advancement of economic growth.*

The German policy of society, this *Gesellschaftspolitik*, aimed to constitute “a market space in which competitive mechanisms could really function”. In order to do so, ordoliberals had to achieve a number of objectives, namely “avoiding centralization, encouraging medium sized enterprises, support for what they call non-proletarian enterprises, that is to say [...] craft enterprises, small businesses, etcetera, increasing access to property ownership, trying to replace the social insurance of risk with individual insurance, and also regulating all the multiple problems of the environment”[237].

However, ordoliberals do not deny the moral role of the state in shaping the social order[238]. The social market economy and its competitive mechanisms, in particular, were not extended to all the social aspects of the state. “[T]he establishment of the social market economy, and the measures to generalise the enterprise form through society, were accompanied by what Röpke referred to as a *Vitalpolitik*, or a ‘politics of life’”[239]. In a sense, *Vitalpolitilk* was the function of the government to compensate “for what is cold, impassive, calculating, rational, and mechanical in the strictly economic game of competition”[240].

Indeed, during the Walter Lippman Colloquium, Rüstow stated that if, “in the interests of the optimum productivity of the collectivity and the maximum independence of the individual, we organize the economy of the social body

---

[235] *Ibidem*.
[236] *Ibidem*.
[237] *Ivi,* pp. 240-241.
[238] Flew (2012), p. 56.
[239] *Ibidem*.
[240] Foucault (2008), p. 242.

according to the rules of the market economy, there remain new and heightened needs for integration to be satisfied"[241]. Further, as ordoliberal Röpke clearly argues in *The Social Crisis of Our Times,*

> we have no intention to demand more from competition than it can give. It is a means of establishing order and exercising control in the narrow sphere of a market economy based on the division of labor, but not a principle on which a whole society can be built. From the sociological and moral point of view it is even dangerous because it tends more to dissolve than to unite. If competition is not to have the effect of a social explosive and is at the same time not to degenerate, its premise will be a correspondingly sound political and moral framework[242].

As Werner Bonefeld puts it,

> *Vitalpolitik* relieves individuals from the fear of economic freedom and makes individuals accept their responsibility for that freedom. It is, thus, about creating individuals who have the moral stamina and courage for competition and the inner strength to absorb shocks, who help themselves and others when the going gets tough, and who adjust to market pressures willingly and on their own initiative[243].

To conclude this section, it is worth noting that Ralf Ptak, in his insightful re-evaluation of the origins of ordoliberalism, although he acknowledges the fundamental role that Foucault had in describing and recognizing the elements of novelty of this form of liberalism (compared to classical liberalism), Ptak also highlights his limits, as the French philosopher underestimated "the extent to which both German and Austrian neoliberal economists shared a particular

---

[241] Cited in Foucault (2008), p. 262.
[242] *Ibidem*.
[243] W. Bonefeld (2013). 'German ordo-liberalism and the politics of vitality'. *Renewal*, 20(4), p. 37.

(sociological) understanding of economics and fought a narrow econometric/technical understanding"[244].

To support his hypothesis (in particular, against those who support the distinction between Austrian and German neoliberalism in order to emphasize the German state tradition), Ptak quotes Hayek biographer Alan Ebenstein:

> Hayek's discussion of the West German "social market economy" sheds light on his conception of optimal, or at least adequate, societal order. Relating a story about Erhard, Hayek recalled that "we were alone for a moment, and he turned to me and said, 'I hope you don't misunderstand me when I speak of a social market economy (Soziale Marktwirtschaft). I mean by that that the market economy as such is social not that it needs to be made social." In Law, Legislation and Liberty, Hayek commented on the term "social market economy" that "I regret this usage though by means of it some of my friends in Germany (and more recently in England) have apparently succeeded in making palatable to wider circles the sort of social order for which I am pleading[245].

With hindsight, according to Ptak, one can note a gradual merging of the specific version of German neoliberalism (ordoliberalism) with the Austrian and Anglo-Saxon counterparts, "especially in the field of competition theory proper"[246].

---

[244] R. Ptak (2009). 'Neoliberalism in Germany: Revisiting the Ordoliberal Foundations of the Social Market Economy'. In P. Mirowski and D. Plehwe. *The road from Mont Pe`lerin: The Making of Neoliberal Thought Collective*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, pp. 99-100.
[245] A. Ebenstein (2001). *Friedrich Hayek*. New York, Palgrave, p. 242. Cited in Mirowski and Plehwe (2009), pp. 107-108.
[246] Mirowski and Plehwe (2009), p. 126.

American neoliberalism and the theory of human capital

The second case study of Foucault is the American neoliberalism of the Chicago School. The governmental practice of the United States, he argues, changed in the period between the 1930s and the 1960s, "with the New Deal of the 1930s, wartime planning, post-Second World War social security programs for returned soldiers, and the 'Great Society' programs of the 1960s all pointing in the direction of an expansion of the role of government in economic and social life"[247].

According to Foucault, there are a number of fundamental differences between European and American neoliberalism. First, since the beginning, the American version of liberalism did not present itself as a way to limit the role of the State, yet rather the demand for liberalism founded and legitimized the State[248]. This perspective relies on von Hayek's view (at least in Foucault's reading of the Austrian born economist), who, far from defining himself as a conservative[249], attempted to link liberalism to its own utopia: "[i]t is up to us to create liberal utopias, to think in a liberal mode, rather than presenting liberalism as a technical alternative for government. Liberalism must be a general style of thought, analysis, and imagination"[250].

Second, contrary to ordoliberalism, American neoliberalism extended the economic sphere well beyond the economic domain, namely to invade the entire social sphere, "thus eliding any difference between the economy and the social"[251]. In other words, while in Europe the task was that of governing for the sake of the economy and its mechanisms, in the United States there is an explicit

[247] Flew (2012), p. 57.
[248] Foucault (2008), p. 217.
[249] Cf. F. A. von Hayek (1976). 'Why I am not a conservative'. In *The Constitution of Liberty*. London, Routledge, pp. 398–399.
[250] Foucault (2008), p. 219.
[251] Lemke (2001), p. 197.

attempt to redefine the social sphere to the logic of the economy. There is a shift in the way to intend the social relations of the individuals, understanding them within the framework of a rational-economic logic. The government itself become a sort of enterprise "whose task it is to universalize competition and invent market-shaped systems of action for individuals, groups and institutions"[252]. The economic sphere extends its domain to all aspects of human action, to wit that each of these domains fall into the logic of allocation of scarce resources for competitive objectives.

Third, the American neoliberalism was particularly interested in the theory of human capital. This interest is due, according to Foucault, to two reasons: firstly, the "extension of economic analysis into a previously unexplored domain"; and, secondly, "on the basis of this, the possibility of giving a strictly economic interpretation of a whole domain previously thought to be non-economic"[253].

American neoliberals argue that, in classical economics (Smith, Ricardo, Keynes), there is a striking absence: the analysis of labour "into the field of economic analysis"[254]. For example, "Ricardo entirely reduced the analysis of labor to the analysis of the quantitative variable of time"[255]. On the other hand, it is also true that these neoliberal authors never argued with Marx "for reasons that we may think are to do with economic snobbery"[256], yet, if they had discussed his theory, they would have claim that

> [i]t is quite true that Marx makes labor [...] one of the essential linchpins, of his analysis. But what does he do when he analyzes labor? What is it that he shows the worker sells? Not his labor, but his labor power. He sells his labor power for a certain time against a wage established on the basis of a

[252] *Ibidem*.
[253] Foucault (2008), p. 219.
[254] *Ivi*, p. 220.
[255] *Ibidem*.
[256] *Ibidem*.

> given situation of the market corresponding to the balance between the supply and demand of labor power. And the work performed by the worker is work that creates a value, part of which is extorted from him. Marx clearly sees in this process the very mechanics or logic of capitalism. And in what does this logic consist? Well, it consists in the fact that the labor in all this is "abstract," that is to say, the concrete labor transformed into labor power, measured by time, put on the market and paid by wages, is not concrete labor; it is labor that has been cut off from its human reality, from all its qualitative variables, and precisely [...] the logic of capital reduces labor to labor power and time. It makes it a commodity and reduces it to the effects of value produced[257].

To rephrase, Marx centered his analysis on the study of work and the worker. Yet his narrative, focused on the analysis of work as a mere temporal and quantitative factor, is a critically oriented move. It is precisely to show that this conception is the outcome of the capitalist mode of production, which reduce concrete labour to abstract human labour, depriving the individual of his human qualities[258]. As Marx puts it,

> [b]y equating, for example, the coat as a thing of value to the linen, we equate the labour embedded in the coat with the labour embedded in the linen. Now it is true that the tailoring which makes the coat is concrete labour of a different sort from the weaving which makes the linen. But the act of equating tailoring with weaving reduces the former in fact to what is really equal in the two kinds of labour, to the characteristic they have in common of being human labour. This is a roundabout way of saying that weaving too, in so far as it weaves value, has nothing to distinguish it from tailoring, and, consequently, is abstract human labour[259].

[257] *Ivi*, p. 221.
[258] Cf. Marengo (2015), p. 213.
[259] Marx (1990), p. 142.

Ultimately, according to Marx, the proletarian revolution will result in overcoming the alienation of workers linked to this kind of labour. The revolution, reversing the relations of production, will bring to life the human qualities of labour, repressed in the dynamics of the capital.

The point is, in classical political economy (Marx included, even if not considered by American neoliberal theorists), "labour is neutralized and construed only using quantitative concepts and in temporary forms"[260]. On the contrary, *American neoliberals such as Theodore W. Schultz (1902–1998), Gary Becker (1930–2014) and Jacob Mincer (1922–2006), inaugurating the field of research on human capital, studied individuals precisely as elements of value, which can be increased through investment*. This means, in terms of education, for example, that if an individual invests time and money to get a master's degree in business administration, s/he will increase the possibilities to get a top job or an executive position and thus increase dramatically her/his personal income. In other words, through this kind of investments, the individual maximizes her/his future earnings and socio-economic well-being.

Therefore, there is a clear shift from a focus on supply and demand for labour power, to the concept of

> the individual – *homo economicus* – as an 'entrepreneur of himself', who allocates their time and resources between consumption and the generation of personal satisfaction, and investment in the self (human capital, which can also include investment in the family). Such an individual is not, for the neo-liberals, an alienated subject, but is rather an investor, an innovator, and an entrepreneur of the self[261].

This understanding of labour has important consequences. Since the inception of ordoliberalism, there was a concern in Europe about the "cold"

[260] Lemke (2001), p. 198.
[261] Flew (2012), p. 58.

mechanisms of the market, compensated by oldoliberals themselves with *Vitalpolitik*, which was to provide moral and cultural values to the benefit of the social sphere by the state. Further, "various mechanisms were devised so that the individual is not alienated from their work environment, family, community or the natural environment, by a state that sought to 'maintain itself above the different competing groups and enterprises' and act as a guarantor of cooperation among the competing interests"[262]. Contrariwise, American neoliberalism did not try to diminish or compensate the effects of the market on the society, yet rather it indefinitely generalized the economic form of the market "throughout the social body and including the whole of the social system not usually conducted through or sanctioned by monetary exchanges"[263].

This is precisely the second point, as anticipated above: human capital is merely one of the social and political domains understood within an economic framework, for the market form goes well beyond its classical economic limits. To rephrase, an analysis based on market economy, or in terms of demand and supply, "can function as a schema which is applicable to non-economic domains". Relations of all kinds became intelligible through market economy analyses, resulting in "economic theories of crime, the family, marriage, capital punishment etc."[264].

Particularly relevant is the analysis of governmental practices using an economic grid. This

> involves scrutinizing every action of the public authorities in terms of the game of supply and demand, in terms of efficiency with regard to the particular elements of this game, and in terms of the cost of intervention by the public authorities in the field of the market. In short, it involves criticism

[262] *Ibidem*.
[263] Foucault (2008), p. 243.
[264] Flew (2012), p. 58.

> of the governmentality actually exercised which is not just a political or juridical criticism[265].

Thus, governmental practices are studied and evaluated through these categories in the name of "*do-not-laisser-faire* government, in the name of a law of the market which will enable each of its activities to be measured and assessed"[266]. That is to say, there is the emergence of a "permanent economic tribunal confronting government"[267]. As an example of this, Foucault cites the *American Enterprise Institute*, which function was that of "measure all public activities in cost-benefit terms"[268], including social programs in the field of education, health, racial segregation.

As it is clear, these mechanisms go well beyond the liberal autolimitations of the government for the creation of a market space, for here the market and its instruments become precisely the starting point for government practices, as a reference source that clarify how it is necessary to act.

As I outlined above, while the ordoliberals had a clear program to pursue the conditions of efficiency of the market, as exemplified by their policy of society (*Gesellschaftspolitik*), American neoliberalism should be understood "not so much as a political alternative"[269], yet rather as a sort of utopia, "a method of thought, a grid of economic and sociological analysis"[270].

> There's no presumption that each individual is really, wholly and always a *homo oeconomicus*. Rather, the model of *homo oeconomicus* is a predicting tool, useful to limit government intervention to those policies that are not

[265] Foucault (2008), p. 246.
[266] *Ivi*, p. 247.
[267] *Ibidem*.
[268] *Ibidem*.
[269] *Ivi*, p. 218.
[270] *Ibidem*.

going to be frustrated by the behavior of its citizens. In this sense, *homo oeconomicus* works as "the interface between government and individual"[271].

[271] F. Guala (2006). 'Critical Notice: Michel Foucault's Naissance de la Biopolitique'. *Economics And Philosophy*, 22(3), p. 437.

2. NEOLIBERAL SUBJECTIVITY

2.1 Beyond ideology: an anthropology of human capital

Because of the lack of critical commentary in the lectures on German and American neoliberalism (analyzed above), some scholars, such as Michael C. Behrent, went so far as to argue that, despite the mainstream reading of Michel Foucault, in that period he did not criticize neoliberalism, "rather, he strategically endorsed it"[272].

I think this kind of (wrong) conclusions are possible for a simple reason: the peculiar method of Foucault research. Of course, "[l]iberalism could be represented as a convenient cover for an underlying reality of oppression and domination"[273], as it is for standard neo-Marxist narratives. In these perspectives, it is possible to label neoliberalism as mere ideology, showing its faults, its pseudo-scientific traits and condemn it "as the servant of whatever power is in place"[274]. Yet, this is not Foucault's aim. As Francesco Guala pointed out, "[u]nlike the Marxian, Foucault does not have a convenient distinction between base and ideology, or science and pseudo-science, and therefore is forced to take liberalism seriously for deep theoretical reasons"[275].

The fact of understanding neoliberalism as something different from a dominant ideology does not mean to endorse it. Rather, understanding neoliberalism as a governmentality, a *technique of government*, means deciphering it as something more complex and many-sided than an economic issue. It means understanding it as a phenomenon subtler than a mere dominant economic ideology aimed at resorting class power, as in Harvey's reading.

---

[272] M. C. Behrent (2009). 'Liberalism Without Humanism: Michel Foucault And The Free-market Creed, 1976–1979'. *Modern Intellectual History*, 6(03), p. 539.
[273] F. Guala (2006), p. 433.
[274] *Ibidem*.
[275] *Ivi*, p. 434.

As I previously pointed out, Foucault's research does not aim to show the deficiencies, the faults of a wrong ideology, yet rather his interest relies on understanding how a particular (govern)mentality, how a particular way of thinking, imposed itself as something *true*, as something capable of shaping government practices and individual behaviors. As Read argues, "[f]or Foucault, we have to take seriously the manner in which the fundamental understanding of individuals as governed by interest and competition is not just an ideology that can be refused and debunked, but is an intimate part of how our lives and subjectivity are structured"[276].

According to Stefano Marengo, the limit of the majority of neo-Marxist accounts (*Antonio Gramsci*, for example, *is an exception*) is precisely that power (in general) is understood as having roots, as being embedded, in *economic* power (in particular) so that this results just in material relations of production. Framing the reasoning in terms of relations between production and ideology, neo-Marxist narratives remain cling to a negative understanding of non-economic power, to wit that they grasp only the *repressive* aspect of power. In this sense, the superstructure (the culture, the institutions, the rituals of a society) is just the instrument of the ruling class to prevent the uprising of the exploited workers, the proletarians. The invaluable contribution of Foucault is that of understanding power as something wider and more complex than a mere set of economic relations, disclosing all its generative aspects shaping the reality[277].

As Foucault explains during an interview:

> I would also distinguish myself from para-Marxists like Marcuse who give the notion of repression an exaggerated role – because power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockage and repression, in the manner of a great Superego, exercising itself only in a negative way. If, on the contrary,

[276] Read (2009), pp. 34-35.
[277] Cf. Marengo (2015), p. 222.

> power is strong this is because, as we are beginning to realise, it produces effects at the level of desire-and also at the level of knowledge. Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it[278].

For the analysis of neoliberalism and its complexities, Foucault's concept of *governmentality* is essential. Yet, it is not easy to grasp the intricacy of this notion, as Foucault uses it in a variety of contexts with different definitions. As an example, in *Security, Territory, Population*, he gives three meanings.

> By this word "governmentality" I mean three things. First, by "governmentality" I understand the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific [...] power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument. Second, by "governmentality" I understand the tendency, the line of force, that for a long time, and throughout the West, has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power – sovereignty, discipline, and so on – of the type of power that we can call "government" and which has led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses (*appareils*) on the one hand, [and, on the other] to the development of a series of knowledges (*savoirs*). Finally, by "governmentality" I think we should understand the process, or rather, the result of the process by which the state of justice of the Middle Ages became the administrative state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was gradually "governmentalized"[279] [the italics is mine].

In Foucault's telling, throughout the modern world the state was depositary, almost exclusively, of this function of government, as understood in the first definition of governmentality, above in italics. Indeed, he speaks

---

[278] M. Foucault (1980). 'Body/Power'. In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings*. Trans. C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham, K. Soper, New York, Pantheon Books, p. 59.
[279] Foucault (2007), p. 144.

significantly of "governmentalization of the state"[280]. With the complicity of institutions such as hospitals, asylums, prisons and armies, the state managed to exercise a constant control on the population, shaping its way of life. Only the economy domain, with the emergence of liberalism starting in the eighteenth century[281], managed to escape the direct control of the state. Yet here again it was because of a precise *strategy of government*, to wit, to govern without the government (of the state). Foucault shows exactly this: we should not automatically identify the state and the government, especially if we consider the neoliberal rationality[282].

The neoliberal governmentality deprives the public sphere of its previous functions to the advantage of privatization, diverting political power from the state to the market; making the market, in Foucault's terms, a site of "veridication". This shift triggers two consequences: first, the state, abandoning its traditional functions, becomes a "governmental agency" among others (for example, economic and financial enterprises); second, there is a redefinition of the ways and the aims of government in general[283].

The redefinition of the model of government is clear if one considers the legislative function of the state. A paramount characteristic of the law is precisely that of determine what it is not legal, what it is not allowed. The state, establishing the law, imply that what it is not forbidden, it is allowed. The law of the state establishes the limits of licit actions, to wit, the limits of citizens' freedom; yet it does not say how citizens should use their freedom. On the contrary, *the manifest aim of neoliberal rationality is that of managing and organizing freedom*. In other words, it has a normative and generative meaning, not a legalistic one.

Clearly, the challenge of human capital theory of neoliberalism is not that of imposing limits to individual action, yet rather it is that of understanding the

---

[280] *Ibidem*.
[281] Cf. "Michel Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics*" in this dissertation.
[282] Cf. Marengo (2015), pp. 222-223.
[283] Cf. *ivi*, p. 223.

individual in its biological roots, defining *normality standards* for her/his behavior. Rather than a dichotomy between licit and illicit, as in the law of the state, there is the emergence of the dichotomy between *normal* and *abnormal*. In other words, *if the individual is understood as human capital, there is a way in which s/he must behaves: s/he must make the most of her/his human capital, investing as much as possible in her/his value*.

Thus, normality standards formulate, to a public level, a natural (or biological) tendency, deciphering the biological duty to a political, economic and social duty. To rephrase, neoliberal rationality reads the behaviour of an individual as "*healthy*" when her/his conduct is consistent with the norm (the norm of taking advantage of her/his human capital, investing on it, etc.), and as "*pathological*" each conduct different from the norm[284].

George Gilder, an American champion of futuristic digital technology, exemplifies this attitude, claiming that poverty is "less a state of income than a state of mind"[285]. As passionate advocate of capitalism, he celebrates "the heroic creativity of entrepreneurs" in his *Wealth and Poverty*[286]. His claim about poverty has the merit (possibly the *only* merit) of indicating what is at stake for the neoliberal rationality: *the notions of poverty, wealth and income are indicators, or symptoms, of the health status, of the state of normality of an individual in her/his entirety*. In Gilder's telling, what the "so-called poor" really need is morals: "[t]he welfare state destroys the morals of the poor", as they are literally "*ruined* by the overflow of American prosperity [the italics is mine]"[287]. For the neoliberal governmentality the poor need a cure (which, according to Gilder, is an "ethical" remedy) for their illness, to wit, they need to invest in their

---

[284] Cf. *ivi*, pp. 223-224.
[285] Cited in B. R. Barber (2008). *Consumed. How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*. New York, W. W. Norton & Company, p. 44.
[286] Cited in Barber (2008), p. 43.
[287] G. F. Gilder (1994). 'Freedom from Welfare Dependency'. *Religion and Liberty*, 4(2), accessed 23 November 2015, http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-4-number-2/freedom-welfare-dependency.

human capital to become healthy, wealthy, *normal*, again. Poverty becomes the explicit symptom of illness, the social epiphenomenon of an inadequate, deformed, abnormal existence.

This is precisely the biopolitical dimension of neoliberalism. Human capital, as economic function, is the paradigm of a governmental rationality for which there is at stake the life itself of the individuals[288]. As Thatcher famously puts it: "[e]conomics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul"[289]. The formation of a human capital is the discipline of existence aimed at creating the conditions for the emergence of entrepreneurial subjects, or *homines œconomici*.

[288] Cf. Marengo (2015), p. 224.
[289] M. Thatcher (1981). 'Interview for *Sunday Times*'. *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, accessed 25 November 2015, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104475.

2.2 Why still neoliberalism? A diagnostic question

Neoliberalism is far to come to an end as a reaction to the financial crisis of 2008, as someone wants to believe. This would mean that neoliberalism is simply a sort of *laissez-faire* ideology, and its crises may lead to the restauration of state interventionism, and Keynesianism in particular. This belief is wrong in two ways: first, as I showed, neoliberal policies *require* a constant state control and intervention to maintain and foster the conditions for competition in the market and the society itself (in this sense, there is no faith in the naturalness of the market, as in classical liberalism); second, as I tried to make clear, neoliberalism is not *merely* a set of economic policies put in place since the 1970s and the 1980s, nor a mere dominant ideology as presented in mainstream accounts.

On the other hand, if one follows standard neo-Marxist interpretations, s/he must conclude that "[o]n both the domestic and the international level, neoliberalism has undertaken the destruction of this social order and has restored the strictest rules of capitalism"[290]. That is to say, through crises, the capital continues its relentless centenary advancement in renewed forms. The underlying question of this kind of accounts is, as chapter 15 of Dume´nil and Le´vy's *Capital Resurgent* inquires: "Who Benefits from the Crime?"[291]. Of course, "[f]inance benefited"[292].

The financial sector, and in particular "those who live off of financial revenues"[293], are identified as the main beneficiaries, perpetuating and increasing their holdings, and, thus, they are identified as the criminals. For example, studying the cases of the United States and France with substantial use of

[290] Dume´nil, G. and D. Le´vy (2004). *Capital Resurgent: Rots of the Neoliberal Revolution*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, p. 1.
[291] *Ivi*, p. vi.
[292] *Ivi*, p. 129.
[293] *Ivi*, p. 135.

empirical data, Dume´nil and Le´vy find that, "[d]espite temporary problems, neoliberal policies during the 1980s and most of the 1990s [...] unequivocally benefited financial corporations"[294]. More generally, according to them, what the dominant classes managed to obtain through neoliberalism was the restoration of

> their revenues and assets, both in the absolute and relative to the other classes of the population. By draining profits (which had, moreover, declined) toward the financial sector, expanding the levy made through taxation, and increasing interest payments and dividends, these classes restored their income, although the rate of profit had not yet re-bounded. It sufficed to levy proportionately more, and that is what was done[295].

However, as Dardot and Laval insightfully pointed out, there is a theoretical problem in this kind of reasoning:

> Since finance is triumphant, it was on the move from the start. Here we have a recurrent fallacy, which consists in identifying the beneficiary of a crime with its author, as if the emergence of a new social form was to be attributed to the consciousness of one or more strategists as regards its source or real centre; and as if recourse to the intentionality of a subject were the ultimate principle of any historical intelligibility[296].

The problem is precisely that, in this kind of neo-Marxist arguments, the factual, historical results of a process (the achievements of neoliberalization) are equated with the objectives of the ruling classes, as if the results obtained by the dominant classes were their goals from the outset.

---

[294] *Ivi*, p. 133.
[295] *Ivi,* p. 139.
[296] Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 13.

Nonetheless, if we accept the thesis that the process of global neoliberalization was not explicitly aimed at restoring the class power of the elites, then a fundamental problem remains: *how is it possible that we are still implementing, after more than 30 years of crises and disappointments, neoliberal policies?* Or, as Colin Crouch puts it, the challenge today is "*not* to explain why neo-liberalism will die following its crisis, but the very opposite: how it comes about that neoliberalism is emerging from the financial collapse more politically powerful than ever"[297].

Far from being a mere set of economic policies, or "just" a repressive dominant ideology, neoliberalism is, rather, *productive* of social relations, or, more precisely, it is "*the form of our existence* – the way in which we are led to conduct ourselves, to relate to others and to ourselves"[298]. Drawing from this statement of Dardot and Laval, I argue that it is not possible to understand the characterization of human behaviors without taking into consideration the neoliberal rationality in which we are deeply involved. Therefore, from this perspective, *neoliberalism is a way of making and shaping the individual, rather than a particular set of policies or an ideology*. This is a meaningful direction of research, I think, to unmask neoliberalism and thus begin to give an answer to the fundamental question posed above.

As I have already showed, Foucault engages with Marx's characterization of labour as the sphere of exploitation of the worker by the capitalist, contrasting this analysis with the neoliberal theory of human capital:

> I don't think we can simply accept the traditional Marxist analysis, which assumes that, labor being man's concrete essence, the capitalist system is what transforms labor into profit, into hyperprofit or surplus value. The fact is capitalism penetrates much more deeply into our existence. That system,

[297] C. Crouch (2011). *The Strange Non-Death Of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, UK, Polity Press.
[298] Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 8.

> as it was established in the nineteenth century, was obliged to elaborate a set of political techniques, techniques of power, by which man was tied to something like labor—a set of techniques by which people's bodies and time would become labor power and labor time so as to be effectively used and thereby transformed into hyper profit[299].

The theory of human capital equates all individuals in their anthropological characterization: they are *naturally* driven by interests and investments of value. It is indeed a natural fact, the biological dimension of neoliberalism: as I showed above, wealth does not mean high income for the neoliberal rationality, it is rather a state of mind, a health status, a state of normality (in the sense that it follows the nature of the individual). Neoliberalism means: "capitalism embedded in the subject", as a part of the individual. That is, *we are all entrepreneurs*. Or, as someone still dare to criticize the all-embracing competition and self-interest mechanisms, one might rephrase: the factual realization of us becoming all entrepreneurs would be the full implementation of the neoliberal rationality. A neoliberal utopia.

To rephrase, the neoliberal rationality produces the same kind of subjectivities. In this sense, Read maintains that *neoliberalism is a "capitalism without capitalism"*[300]*: not only it maintains private proprieties, processes of social stratification and the unequal distribution of wealth, yet it manages to do so by hiding its social insecurities and struggles, with the paradoxical method of extending the capitalistic logic to all kind of relations*. In other words, the opposition and the difference between capitalist and worker has been eliminated by producing a new subject; or, as Read puts it, a new "mode of subjection, a *new production of subjectivity*"[301]. I argue that, by means of these bottom-up

---

[299] M. Foucault (2000). 'Truth and Juridical Forms'. In *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984: Volume Three*. Trans. R. Hurley, New York, New Press, p. 86. Cited in Read (2009), p. 31.
[300] Read (2009), p. 32.
[301] *Ibidem*.

mechanisms (and not *only* by imposing its economic policies from on high), neoliberalism managed to survive its crises for more than 30 years.

2.3 A contemporary perspective on neoliberal governmentality: Human Resource Management

To recapitulate, for the neoliberal governmentality the market is the only site of veridication, the mechanism to asses and evaluate each conduct, from governmental practices to individual actions. The market is the site of truth. The government needs to assure that the mechanisms of the market are respected and fostered. That was the ordoliberal governmentality, which had to coordinate the (bio)political practices to a regime of veridication that assigned to the market the role of assessing the truth and the false. The further step, undertaken by the American neoliberalism of the Chicago School, was that of promoting and fostering the *self-government practices* of individuals, which follow the same principles and rules of economic processes[302].

With this precise aim, the American neoliberal theorists elaborated the theory of human capital, which for Foucault is the matrix of human transformations: from individuals to entrepreneurs of themselves (*homines œconomici*). *The neoliberal subject (according to the theory of human capital) behaves equally in the market and in the society, following the strategical rationality of capitalistic enhancement, to wit, increase of value in a capitalistic sense*. The *true* model of the economy shifts from the (ordoliberal) level of generalization of the model of the enterprise to the society, to the level of the individual her/himself (the biological life itself). To rephrase, *the biological control of the individual is in charge of the individual her/himself. Individuals are subjectivized as human capital, within a regime of truth based on an economic (and managerial) order*. Thus, the role of the state is not only that of foster and enhance market mechanisms, guaranteeing the possibilities of

[302] Cf. Nicoli (2012), pp. 88-89.

freedom and competition among *homines œconomici*, yet also that of frame its growth policies towards the increase of human capital of each individual[303].

At this point, it might be interesting to disclose the meanings and the mechanisms of human capital enhancement in the contemporary neoliberal society, trying to "update" Foucault's argumentations to present-day. In order to do so, it is useful to dwell upon a revealing case study. Massimiliano Nicoli argues that the recent field of Human Resource Management (HRM) reveals a number of paramount aspects in this sense. First and foremost, *in contemporary workplaces, there is a shift from juridical contracts to "psychological" contracts*. That is to say, HRM deciphers the need to lighten the burden of the juridical and hierarchical aspects of working relationships, which are identified as organizational inflexibilities, thus as penalizing elements for competition. For this reason, *Human Resource Management fosters an intangible type of relationship, namely that of a psychological identification between the human resource and the organization (enterprise)*[304].

Indeed, as far as the particular Italian case is concerned, in recent years, the trend was that of producing an indefinite number of atypical job contracts (fixed-term, short-term, "work-for-hire", part-time, intermittent employment etc.) in contrast with the "rigid" open-ended contract ("*contratto a tempo indeterminate*"), associated with a standard form of employee's work. However, this proliferation of legal relationships has not to be understood as an excessive control of the legislator, rather as *the formulation, on the basis of the right, of an increasing deregulation of the job market through surplus legislative outputs*[305]. To rephrase, the legislative transformation from the standard types of contract to the "psychological" type is the translation, in the domain of law, of the individualization of the employment relationship; that is to say, there is a shift

303 Cf. *ivi*, pp. 89-90.
304 Cf. *ivi* p. 90.
305 Cf. *ivi* p. 91.

from the collective relations of the union with the enterprise to an individual relationship and the marketing of personnel[306].

In this last period, we have witnessed in Italy the efforts to reduce the number of contracts, thus simplifying the legislative framework. In any event, whether we are coping with the complexity of different types of contract or with one unified contract, *the specific importance of the legal instrument as a function to regulate the relationship between employee and enterprise is reduced to inconsistency*. In particular, an extensive literature in the field of business economics (not to mention the rhetoric of the political discourse) relates the above mentioned liberalization of the labour market with the imperative needs of *flexibility* imposed by the internationalization of the markets and by the challenges posed by the global economic competition.

Thus, according to the neoliberal rationality, the judiciary – the domain of law – is responsible for tighten up the organizational structures of the enterprise, both on a quantitative level (as the enterprise might need either to reduce the size of its variable capital or to increase it, depending on the fluctuations of the markets), and on a qualitative level (as a rigid jurisdiction in labour matters represents an obstacle to flexibility, "creativity", and in general to the needs of a "lean" and "innovative" enterprise). To rephrase, *the imperative demand of the globalized market for flexibility encourages and fosters the deconstruction of the legislative structure*, which is repeatedly accused of tightening up both the labour market (demand for flexibility *outside* the enterprise) and the organization (demand for flexibility *within* the enterprise), making them both "rigid"[307].

The lightening of the judicial system affects considerably the business-managerial governmental reason, to wit, the technologies of power operating in the workplace. In particular, the transformation of the judiciary is the result of a

[306] Cf. Boldizzoni (2007), p. xii.
[307] Cf. Nicoli (2012), pp. 91-92.

process of internal refinement, of maintenance, improvement and development of the organizational governmentality; in a sense, it recalls the process, analyzed by Foucault in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, of the principle of autolimitation of the liberal art of government[308].

The transformations in the organization of work that I have described, normally referred to as *postfordism*, is part of the historical affirmation, to a global level, of the neoliberal rationality of government. It is difficult to ignore the perseverance of the call for the *truth of globalized markets* by the political and the business discourses. It is also difficult to deny that, since 1979 (the year of Foucault's lectures on neoliberalism), the "alethurgic"[309] strength of the market (which is more and more difficult to define as a mere delimited "space") become enormous. *"Flexibility" is thus the name of a paramount coercive truth which appear within the contemporary free market economy: the leitmotiv, the refrain both of economic policies and of the techniques of organization of work.* To not accept this truth means to interfere with the mechanisms of creation of truth themselves, to wit, the governments or enterprises which dare to go against it, would gain a stigma of ignorance, inability and incompetence; and, above all, they would destine themselves to extinction[310].

There is yet another site of veridication, which can be found in particular in the practices of the neoliberal organization of work; a site which is directly linked to the question of human capital theory. This site of veridication is the subjectivity of the worker her/himself, of the "*human resource*". This veridication occurs in the sphere of the inner being, in the intimacy of the inner self, where it is possible to situate the question of the "psychological" contract (which is now necessary because of the "dissolution" of the juridical contract): *the issue at stake*

---

[308] Cf. "Michel Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics"* in this dissertation.
[309] "Etymologically, alethurgy would be the production of truth, the act by which truth is manifested". M Foucault and A. Davidson (2011). *The courage of truth*. Trans. G. Burchell, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 3.
[310] Cf. Nicoli (2012), p. 92.

of this contract to stipulate between enterprise and worker is precisely that of creating a subject "who is subjectified (subjectivé) *through the compulsory extraction of truth"*[311]*; to wit, a subject who intentionally express the truth which is imposed to her/himself: the identification between the individual and the enterprise.*

It is only from the 1960s that Human Resource Management achieved to establish itself as an autonomous branch of knowledge, liberating itself from sociology and psychology of work, thus becoming a specific subject in Anglo-Saxon universities (in Italy, this happened as late as the 1970s)[312]. The knowledge and the knowhow of the management of human resources hang in the balance between theory and practice, as its immense literature focuses, on a case-by-case basis, on the business-economical aspects or on the political and cultural ones, respectively. Yet, certainly, there is a point where the literature seems to fully agree: since the 1980s and the 1990s, human resource became an essential creator of "added value", to wit, a decisive asset for the success of the business. In short, there is a shift from the individual understood as mere replaceable employee to an essential source of competitive advantage[313].

One can clearly recognize the importance and the strategic business relevance of human resource if one considers that enterprises of various type and level are required to establish specific managerial functions. At the same time, Human Resource Management become the framework within it is possible to advance a specific focus on the subjectivity of the worker and a concern for the culture of entrepreneurship, which are both paramount needs of contemporary managerial models, fostering a kind of consulting practices which do not ask for technical and organizational expertise, but rather focus on the individual and her/his "development"[314].

---

311 Foucault (2007), pp. 239-240.
312 Cf. Boldizzoni (2007), pp. 1-2.
313 Cf. *ivi*, p. 1.
314 Cf. Nicoli (2012), pp. 93-94.

The knowledge of Human Resource Management includes a complex variety of discourses and practices: techniques of staff recruitment, practices of staff development, activities of performance evaluation, design and implementation of life-long learning projects, development of corporate identity and business culture, depiction of the enterprise as a responsible and ethical subject (as a space of wellbeing and collaboration), development of models of charismatic leadership, concern for processes of identification and "commitment" (understood as a sort of emotional engagement, as a proactive and positive attitude towards the company, which induce the individual to act within the enterprise independently from the "extrinsic benefits" resulting from her/his behaviors, or even *against* her/his own personal interests[315]). All of these aspects are worth peculiar consideration, yet regrettably this goes beyond the modest purposes of my dissertation.

The manager, or the consultant, who is in charge of developing the firm's mission statement, which include a framework of ethics and values, handles "philosophical" discourses and concepts. S/he forces them inside the business language. As a basic example, it might be interesting to consider the "philosophy", or "Corporate Creed", of Toyota Industries Corporation:

> • Always be faithful to your duties, thereby contributing to the Company and to the overall good.
>
> • Always be studious and creative, striving to stay ahead of the times.
>
> • Always be practical and avoid frivolousness.
>
> • Always strive to build a homelike atmosphere at work that is warm and friendly.
>
> • Always have respect for God and remember to be grateful at all times[316].

---

[315] Cf. G. Costa and M. Gianecchini (2005). *Risorse umane. Persone, relazioni e valore*. Milan, McGraw-Hill, p. 206. Cited in Nicoli (2012), p. 94.

[316] Toyota-industries.com. 'Corporate Philosophy - Toyota Industries Corporation', Accessed 11 December 2015, http://www.toyota-industries.com/corporateinfo/philosophy/.

Yet there are finer practices than this naïve "philosophy". *The corporate philosopher or consultant claims this field as her/his own, where s/he can spend her/his "expertise", forcing philosophy in a structured profession*, which is not limited to the development of "Corporate Creeds". There are several examples of "philosophical counseling" applied at field of business, namely the work of Paolo Cervari and Neri Pollastri (*Il filosofo in azienda*[317]), Eugénie Vegleris (*Manager avec la philo*[318]) or Ad Hoogendijk (*Filosofie voor managers*[319]), just to name a few.

This kind of practices aim at producing and encouraging in the worker/individual a dialogue with her/himself, an autonomous research of her/his "authentic self", with the ambition of finding her/his truth, her/his "buried secret"[320]. The ancient principle of *gnōthi seautón*, "know thyself", thus finds yet another historical actualization – instrumentalization? – in the practices of HRM. This includes an increasingly diversified and personalized set of practices: job interviews and less formal conversations, psychometric and personality tests, role-playing and in-basket exercises. All these practices are needed to bring out the inner personality traits which cannot be read in the *curriculum vitae*, and to collect the greatest possible number of information on the individual, to wit, *to create a thorough, reliable, true profile of the (human) resource*[321].

The recruiter has the duty to encourage the interlocutor (the job seeker) to produce the narration of her/himself, of her/his story or biography. Thus, key

---

317 P. Cervari and N. Pollastri (2010). *Il Filosofo in Azienda. Pratiche filosofiche per le organizzazioni*. Milan, Apogeo. Cited in Nicoli (2012), p. 94.
318 E. Vegleris (2006). *Manager avec la philo*. Paris, E´d. d'Organisation.
319 A. Hoogendijk (1991). *Filosofie Voor Managers*. Amsterdam, Veen.
320 Cf. B. Townley (1994). *Reframing Human Resource Management. Power, Ethics and the Subject at Work*. London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi, Sage, pp. 109-110. Cited in Nicoli (2012), p. 95.
321 Cf. Costa and Gianecchini (2005), p. 153, and Boldizzoni (2007), p. 81. Cited in Nicoli (2012), p. 95.

words for the recruiter's job are "listening", "openness", "conversation": the candidate must have the opportunity to freely express her/himself in an open conversation. During the dialogue with the recruiter, the interlocutor has to open her/himself to let her/his personality, behaviors, cognitive styles appear. It must be possible to understand how a subject (the interlocutor) would think, feel, wish to do, in a given situation[322].

Subsequently, if the candidate (the interlocutor) succeed in the selection procedures, the process continues with the gradual integration of the human resource into a position in the new company. In this phase, there are specific accompanying activities, such as mentoring, counselling, coaching, aimed at personal self-development, internalizing the corporate culture, governing individual emotional issues. The career of the human resource within the organization is no longer considered a bureaucratic path, carried out through prearranged steps, yet rather it is based on the effective development and the realization of the "potential" of the human resource. This career development process is possible only if sustained by constant evaluation of performances and provision of timely feedback about achieved results. The contemporary model of HRM requires the worker to govern her/his growth in a space between work and private: the individual has to invest above all in the knowledge of her/himself, s/he has to ask her/himself about her/his own aptitudes and inclinations. S/he has to contribute with her/his reflection to define an orientation about her/his specific occupational activity, conceiving her/his career differently from the past[323].

Thus, *it is precisely within the framework of Human Resource Management that a space of* subjectification *is conceived: the laboratory, the factory of "soul" in which the individual (if s/he wish to work) is invited to enter in relationship with her/himself, making her/himself an object of knowledge,*

[322] Cf. Costa and Gianecchini (2005), p. 158. Cited in Nicoli (2012), p. 96.
[323] Boldizzoni (2007), p. 81. Cited in Nicoli (2012), p. 96.

folding on her/himself to discover her/his authentic, true inner being. This space of subjectification is defined and delineated in the practices of individual development elaborated and tested in a variety of organizational and business contexts. This space of production of the subjectivity can be governed by the manager, the professional of human resource, the consultant; to wit, the individual who assumes the role of "soul" advisor, or the ancient role of spiritual master (*maître*), in short, the "confessor", who manages a particular relation of power, the *confession* within the framework of the working relationship of the psychological contract[324].

As Foucault notes on this particular practice,

> the confession became one of the West's most highly valued techniques for producing truth. We have since become a singularly confessing society. The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rites; one confesses one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles; one goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell. One confesses in public and in private, to one's parents, one's educators, one's doctor, to those one loves; one admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell to anyone else, the things people write books about. One confesses—or is forced to confess. [...] *Western man has become a confessing animal*[325].

With the psychological contract and the practices of Human Resource Management there is at stake the identification, until overlapping, of the individual with the enterprise. As Business Organisation professor Massimo Bergami points out in his *L'identificazione con l'impresa,* the identification with the corporation encourages individuals to develop entrepreneurial attitudes and

[324] Cf. Nicoli (2012), pp. 96-97.
[325] Foucault (1978), p. 59.

proactive behaviors: these characteristics are required in organizational contexts where hierarchical control become negligible in order to leave room to personal initiative. Indeed, post-industrial enterprises do not need subordinate employees, yet rather collaborators, to wit, individuals who wish to "use" their personality for achieving corporate targets, regardless of what the top of the corporate ladder succeed to plan and control through classic managerial practices[326].

If the issue at stake is the identification of the individual with the company, therefore, it is necessary to help the individual to explore her/his inner being, her/his soul, in order to let her/him discover autonomously the truth which is imposed to her/himself: "I am a corporation". The contemporary managerial discourse, along with its organizational practices, provide the framework where the subjectivisation and subjection of the individuals take place, with its peculiar technologies of power and apparatuses (*dispositif)*. In this sense, Human Resource Management represents a contemporary concrete actualization of the ethical, political, pedagogical neoliberal program that Margaret Thatcher summarized in her well-known remark: "[e]conomics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul"[327].

[326] Cf. M. Bergami (1996). *L'identificazione con l'impresa. Comportamenti individuali e processi organizzativi*. Rome, La Nuova Italia Scientifica, p. 36.
[327] Thatcher (1981), http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104475.

2.4 Personal Enterprise, or "the care of the self"

It is curious to observe how Bob Aubrey, an international expert of "human development", could transform the analysis of Foucault in a set of strategies to succeed in business. The Californian consultant drew from Foucault the concept of "personal enterprise", developing it in a method of professional training[328]. In particular, according to Aubrey, individuals should start to see themselves not as mere wage-earners, yet rather as enterprises, selling themselves as services in the market: "[e]very worker must seek out a customer, position himself in a market, set a price, manage his costs, undertake research and development, and train himself. In short, I believe that from the individual's standpoint his work is his enterprise and his development is defined as a personal enterprise"[329].

In this sense, all individual's activities must be understood in terms of *processes of self-valorization*. To put it in Aubrey's terms, "the individual's activity, in its different facets (paid work, charitable work for an association, household management, acquisition of skills, development of a network of contacts, preparation for a change of activity, etc.), is conceived as entrepreneurial in its very essence"[330].

Aubrey drew from the Greek concept of *epimeleia heautou*, "the care of the self", which Foucault studied in his 1981-1982 lectures at the Collège de France:

> [W]hen philosophers and moralists recommend taking care of the self (*epimeleisthai heautou*), it should be understood that they are not just advising one to pay attention to oneself, avoid errors, and protect oneself.

[328] Cf. B. Aubrey and B. Tilliette (1990). *Savoir Faire Savoir*. Paris, InterEditions; B. Aubrey (2000a). *L'entreprise De Soi*. Paris, Flammarion; and B. Aubrey and L. Cohen (1994). *Le Travail Apre`s La Crise*. Paris, InterEditions.
[329] Aubrey and Cohen (1994), p. 85. Cited in Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 295.
[330] Aubrey (2000a), p. 15. Cited in Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 295.

> They are referring to a whole domain of complex and regular activities. We can say that for all of ancient philosophy care of the self was a duty and a technique, a fundamental obligation and a set of carefully fashioned ways of behaving[331].
>
> [...]
>
> We saw the generalization of this idea of the *epimeleia heautou* and I tried to show how "taking care of the self" in this culture of the self of the Hellenistic and imperial epoch was not just an obligation for the young man, due to an inadequate education: one had to take care of the self throughout one's life. And now we find again the idea of education, but of education that is also generalized: the whole of life must be the individual's education. [...] And the *epimeleia heautou*, now that its scale encompasses the whole of life, consists in educating oneself through all of life's misfortunes. There is now something like a sort of spiral between education and form of life. We must educate ourselves constantly through the tests, which are sent to us, and thanks to this care of ourselves, which makes us take these tests seriously. We educate ourselves throughout our life, and at the same time we live in order to be able to educate ourselves. That life and training are coextensive is the first characteristic of the life-test[332].

Drawing more from Gary Becker than from Foucault (consciously or not), Aubrey developed this concept in order to show that today's *epimeleia* ("care of the self") correspond to *personal enterprise*, as market valorization (of one's labour) is equated to self-valorization. Personal enterprise means that professional and personal life are integrated, in the sense that "[p]ersonal enterprise is finding a meaning, an engagement in the totality of one's life"[333]. Everything can be considered enterprise: since the moment a child is sent to school, s/he become an "entrepreneur of his knowledge".

---

[331] M. Foucault and F. Gros (2005). *The Hermeneutics of The Subject*: *Lectures at the Collège the France, 1981-82*. Trans. A. I. Davidson, New York, Palgrave-Macmillan, pp. 493-494.
[332] *Ivi*, pp. 439-440
[333] Aubrey and Cohen (1994), p. 101. Cited in Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 296.

In Aubrey's telling, the concept of "self-mastery" have new meaning: "Today, a new idea is emerging: we are faced with ever more, and ever more rapid, choices, possibilities, and opportunities. Self-mastery therefore no longer consists in leading one's life in a linear, rigid and conformist way, but in proving oneself capable of flexibility, of entrepreneurship"[334]. As the world become more and more complex, providing the individual with an increasing number of possibilities, the meaning of self-mastery become that of managing to cope with this complexity by enhancing one's personal value in the market. And this value can only be enhanced by actuating appropriate "life strategies" to increase one's human capital.

"Self-managed development of personal enterprise"[335] is therefore the new contemporary wisdom, a set of technical practices which everyone should put in practice to produce "self-creation and self-development", "'in order to confront the triple necessity of positioning identity, developing one's human capital and managing a business portfolio"[336]. Needless to say, this all-embracing entrepreneurial attitude should not be a specific trait of the heads of enterprise, yet it must apply to everyone. In short, everyone should put in practice processes of constant "self-diagnosis" and training, possibly with the help of "life strategy advisers", in order to evaluate and enhance one's skills, ways of acting, possibilities of success, and so forth[337].

According to Aubrey, the enterprise has an educational value which confers a special legitimacy to the managers that succeed in it: they are indeed "the equivalent of sages or masters"[338]. As one can clearly see, *there is in Aubrey a constant reference to the works of Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot, in as*

---

334 B. Aubrey (2000b). 'L'entreprise de soi, un nouvel âge' [interview]. *Autrement*, 192, p. 99. Cited in Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 296.
335 Aubrey and Cohen (1994), p. 133. Cited in Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 296.
336 Aubrey (2000a), p. 10. Cited in Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 297.
337 Cf. Aubrey (2000a), p. 22.
338 Aubrey and Tilliette (1990), p. 265. Cited in Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 298.

much as he refers to practices from antiquity (exercises and asceses), equating them to contemporary managerial practices. However, this move is fundamentally dishonest as it is aimed, ultimately, to train the wage-earner to identify her/himself with the enterprise (it is no coincidence that this correspond to the fundamental aim of Human Resource Management practices, as studied above). Indeed, as Dardot and Laval pointed out, "the ascesis of the personal enterprise is completed by the subject's *identification* with the enterprise"; however, "[t]his is quite the opposite of the exercises of 'self-culture' referred to by Foucault, whose object is to establish an ethical distance from oneself – a distance from any social role. Nevertheless, we are dealing with what Éric Pezet has judiciously called 'asceses of performance', which represent a rapidly expanding market"[339].

[339] Dardot and Laval (2013), p. 298.

2.5 The root of neoliberal rationality: a univocal strategy

In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault explains that "[d]iscourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it"[340]. To rephrase, there is not a dichotomy between a discourse of power (the dominant or accepted discourse), and a discourse against it (the dominated or the excluded discourse). Rather, there is a "multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies"[341]. Foucault explains this point with an example.

> The extreme discretion of the texts dealing with sodomy – that utterly confused category – and the nearly universal reticence in talking about it made possible a twofold operation: on the one hand, there was an extreme severity (punishment by fire was meted out well into the eighteenth century, without there being any substantial protest expressed before the middle of the century), and on the other hand, a tolerance that must have been widespread (which one can deduce indirectly from the infrequency of judicial sentences, and which one glimpses more directly through certain statements concerning societies of men that were thought to exist in the army or in the courts)[342].

The neoliberal rationality seems to have lost exactly this tactical dimension of the discourse, namely its *polyvalence*. In neoliberalism, *the difference between citizen and* homo œconomicus *is eradicated through the establishment of a univocal type of relation, namely the relation based on competition and economic self-interest*. That is to say, this kind of relation is not

[340] M. Foucault (1978). *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction. Volume 1*. New York, Pantheon Books, p. 101.
[341] *Ivi*, p. 100.
[342] *Ivi*, p. 101.

only established in the workplace (employer-worker relations), yet also in the public space of citizens and customers: "everything is framed in terms of interests, freedoms and risks"[343].

As a political rationality, neoliberalism is absolutely one sided. There is only one strategy, one way of framing discourses. *There is no tension between competing logics, which would produce different types of subjectivity*, rather, "[s]tates, corporations, individuals are all governed by the same logic, that of interest and competition"[344]. Ultimately, the one-sided logic of neoliberalism is the main reason why it is so difficult to imagine the possibility of a political alternative[345]. A compelling question thus arise, which might be an interesting starting point to develop further research: *is it still possible to imagine a plausible and feasible future not dominated by economic self-interest and competition?*

[343] Read (2009), p. 35.
[344] *Ibidem*.
[345] Cf. "Neoliberalism as the only plausible economic policy agenda" in this dissertation.

3. PERSPECTIVES OF RESEARCH

3.1 Neo-Marxists should not be ignored: a different "Foucault effect"

In the second part of my dissertation, in my attempt to investigate the in-depth meaning of neoliberalism I adopted what might be called a neo-Foucauldian approach, focusing on the "microphysics" side of power and on subjectivisation. I think that, in this way, I highlighted a number of relevant points concerning the peculiarity of neoliberalism today and the production of neoliberal subjectivities. These bottom-up mechanisms are paramount aspects of neoliberalism which are worth studying and exploring accurately. Yet, I recognize that this is not enough. *The analyses I carried out in the second part of my dissertation need to be constantly verified by concrete empirical in-depth macro-analyses of the society*. I am referring to the kind of macro-analyses such as those of David Harvey. Yet, if one follows my argumentation throughout this dissertation, this point might seem as a contradiction.

Indeed, what I criticize of standard neo-Marxist theorizations – such as Harvey's *A Short History*, Dume´nil and Le´vy's *Capital Resurgent*, Overbeek and Van Apeldoorn's *Neoliberalism in Crisis* – is their *over-simplified* notion of power as merely repressive, and the characterization of neoliberalism as *essentially* a reactionary movement with the specific aim to restore class power as a response to the crises of the 1970s (further, in a other cases, such as that of Wendy Brown, the instrumentalization of the work of Foucault to fill a number of theoretical gaps of Marxism). Yet, besides these critical points, there are several aspects of neo-Marxist perspectives which I consider fundamental and should not be quickly rejected.

I do not want to associate my approach to the standard Anglo-Foucauldian governmentality perspective which rejects the Marxian tradition. I am referring to theorizations similar to the work edited by Graham Burchell,

Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect*[346]. In particular, Bob Jessop refers to an "*Anglo-Foucauldian effect*" to describe the impact that Foucault lectures on governmentality (1978-1979) had in the Anglophone world, despite the fact that he did not manage to finalize and publish his work on this topic. Indeed, it was published (in French) only as late as 2004[347]. This effect, according to Jessop, refers to the way of reception of the concept of "governmentality", understood by Foucault as "the conduct of conduct", to wit, the way individuals act autonomously, in a generative sense, and not through coercion (explicit or subtle).

The important point stressed by Jessop is that there is also "another Foucault effect": it is possible to grasp, in the work of the French philosopher, some aspects concerning not merely the deconstruction of state theory (against Marx and structuralism), but also a number of significant contributions to it. Thomas Lemke presented the first systematic work in this sense, studying Foucault's later work on state, statecraft and social power in his *Eine Kritik der politischen Vernunft: Foucaults Analyseder modernen Gouvernementalität* (1997).

Many scholars of the so-called "Anglo-Foucauldian school", such as Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, are not interested in systematically pursue a research around the work of Foucault, yet rather they use some of his insights concerning governmentality in order to explore new areas[348]. In particular, this school understand "government as a decentred process"[349] rather than a centered one. As Rose and Miller put it, governmentality studies focus empirically on

---

346 G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (1991). *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmental Rationality*. Trans. C. Gordon. Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

347 Cfr. B. Jessop (2010). 'Another Foucault effect? Foucault on governmentality and statecraft'. In U. Bröckling, S. Krasmann and T. Lemke. *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*. New York, Routledge, pp. 56-57.

348 Jessop (2010), p. 57.

349 L. Weir, P. O'Malley and S. Clifford (1997). 'Governmentality, criticism, politics'. Economy and Society, 26(4), p. 501.

"forms of power without a centre, or rather with multiple centres, power that was productive of meanings, of interventions, of entities, of processes, of objects, of written traces and of lives"[350]. This perspective results in a denial of the equivalence between government and state (understood as the centralized place of control and rule), in favor of a study at the level of micro-settings, including individual subjectivities, where the practices of rule take place. In short, according to Anglo-Foucauldians, there exist a series of technologies and techniques of governmentality which are not centered around the State as the primary institution for the exercise of political power, to wit, there exists a decentered administration of life[351].

From a theoretical standpoint, this position translate into a rejection of both "structural Marxism", associated with Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar and Nicos Poulantzas, and of "structuralist semiotics of Ferdinand de Saussure and all those who followed him from Bakhtin to Barthes"[352]. One can say that Anglo-Foucauldians perpetuate Foucault's disappointment towards the "Marx effect", namely "the institutions and practices associated with official Marxism, and also explicitly rejected structural Marxism and other structuralist approaches"[353]. In short, Marxism appears outdated in the sense that it could not cope with the novelty of the practices of liberal governmentality. As Rose and Miller put it, one has to take into account, at a minimum, "the accumulation and distribution of persons and their capacities", in addition to the accumulation and distribution of capital[354].

On the other hand, from a political point of view, Anglo-Foucauldians cope with the crisis of post-war institutional agreements and the western class

---

[350] N. Rose and P. Miller (2008). *Governing the Present: Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life*. Cambridge, Polity, p. 9. Cited in Jessop (2010), p. 58.
[351] Cf. Rose and Miller (2008).
[352] Rose and Miller (2008), pp. 2-3.
[353] Jessop (2010), p. 58.
[354] Rose and Miller (2008), p. 2.

compromise characterized by mass production and consumption. The crisis triggered the emergence of social movements irreducible to class politics, as it was engaged in hospitals, universities, prisons, social work, nuclear power and so forth; and, on the other side, there was the first wave of neoliberal criticisms against "big government, big unions, collectivism, bureaucracy, self-regarding professional monopolies, paternalism, and so on"[355]. Simultaneously, these critiques matched with calls for more individual freedom and autonomy in all social fields. The political climate was well expressed by the Californian slogan: "get the state off our backs, out of our pockets, and away from our beds"[356]. The rise of neoliberalism everywhere in the western world, from the UK of Thatcher to the USA of Reagan, from New Zealand to Australia, but from Germany to France, pushed Foucault to "to refocus his 1978–1979 lectures from biopolitics to liberalism and its transformation into neo-liberalism"[357].

Although Anglo-Foucauldians share the critique of neoliberals towards state practices such as those aimed at creating subjects with social claims (to the detriment of freedom and autonomy), they oppose the neoliberal obsession with market (to wit, a sort of market fundamentalism). Nikolas Rose, Pat O'Malley, and Mariana Valverde in an article refer to "advanced liberalism" to identify the governmental practices beyond both market and state, which are specifically aimed at governing individual habits; they investigate neoliberalism in terms of

> a range of techniques that would enable the state to divest itself of many of its obligations, devolving those to quasi-autonomous entities that would be governed at a distance by means of budgets, audits, standards, benchmarks, and other technologies that were both autonomizing and responsibilizing[358].

---

[355] Jessop (2010), p. 59.
[356] *Ibidem*.
[357] *Ibidem*.
[358] N. Rose, P. O'Malley and M. Valverde (2006). 'Governmentality'. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 2, p. 91. Cited in Jessop (2010), p. 59.

The concept of governmentality investigated by Foucault is part of a multifaceted and complex set of analyses within the framework of an evolving intellectual project. However, Anglo-Foucauldians are inclined to understand governmentality and disciplinary power as conclusive remarks against macro-theorizations and, accordingly, they refuse to frame micro-power practices within bigger programs and projects[359]. Yet Foucault was clear about this point:

> I have not studied and do not want to study the development of real governmental practice by determining the particular situations it deals with, the problems raised, the tactics chosen, the instruments employed, forged, or remodelled, and so forth. I wanted to study the art of governing, that is to say, the reasoned way of governing best and, at the same time, reflection on the best possible way of governing. That is to say, I have tried to grasp the level of reflection in the practice of government and on the practice of government. [...] to grasp the way in which this practice that consists in governing was conceptualized both within and outside government, and anyway as close as possible to governmental practice. [...] In short, we could call this the study of the rationalization of government practice in the exercise of political sovereignty[360].

In this sense, Foucault started his 1978-79 research at a micro-physical level of bodies and then scaled up his project to the macro-analyses of state power and political economy: "I would like assure you that [...] I really did intend to talk about biopolitics, and then, things being what they are, I have ended up talking at length [...] about neo-liberalism, and neo-liberalism in its German form"[361].

It is necessary to stress that, according to Foucault, despite the fact that the state has been pictured as a cold monster or as a monolithic and unifying

---

[359] Cf. M. Kempa and A. Singh (2008). 'Private Security, Political Economy and the Policing of Race: Probing global hypotheses through the case of South Africa'. *Theoretical Criminology*, 12(3), p. 340. Cited in Jessop (2010), p. 60.
[360] Foucault (2008), p. 2. Cited in Jessop (2010), p. 60.
[361] Foucault (2008), p. 186.

center of power, it remains an object worth investigating. It should be understood in terms of "composite reality" and "mythicized abstraction", and as a governmentalized entity[362]. As Foucault puts it:

> it is likely that if the state is what it is today, it is precisely thanks to this governmentality that is at the same time both external and internal to the state, since it is the tactics of government that allow the continual definition of what should or should not fall within the state's domain, what is public and what private, what is and what is not within the state's competence, and so on. So, if you like, the survival and limits of the state should be understood on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality[363].

It is clear at this point of the argumentation that Foucault's interests and aims are very different from those of Anglo-Foucauldians. As Mitchell Dean insightfully pointed out, "it would be clearer in Foucault's case to speak of a 'state-effect' rather than the state itself for, unlike much historical sociology, the state does not have a kind of quasi-naturalistic historical existence but is something that is the result of a composition of more primary forces and relations"[364]. Foucault uses the (Marxist) term "superstructure" in a peculiar way: "The State is superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks"[365]. It is a matter of understanding how can a "headless" state act as it were a unified entity, as if it had a head: "How are overall, cumulative effects composed? [...] How is the state effect constituted on the basis of a thousand diverse processes, some of which I have simply tried to point out to you?"[366]

---

[362] Jessop (2010), p. 62.
[363] Foucault (2007), p. 109. Cited in Jessop (2010), p. 62.
[364] M. Dean (1994). *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology*. London, Routledge, p. 156.
[365] M. Foucault (1980). 'Truth and power', in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*. Brighton, Harvester, p. 122. Cited in Dean (1994), p. 156.
[366] Foucault (2007), p. 239. Cited in Jessop (2010), p. 62.

The problem with governmentality studies (the Anglo-Foucauldian school) is that it focuses only on practices and rationalities separated from the study of the state and its role in integrating "power relations within the more general economy of power"[367]. The issue is then the ability of governmentality studies to grasp the authentic meaning of Foucault's research, when he started showing increasing interest in the role of the state. In Jessop's terms, Foucault was "concerned to put the state in its place within a general economy of power and went on to explore how government is superimposed on preceding forms of state, including sovereignty over territory as well as disciplinary power and biopolitics"[368].

Foucault's lectures on liberalism and neoliberalism are already oriented to a macro-level type of analysis, moving beyond his concern with the microphysical side of power. In Foucault's words:

> What I wanted to do—and this was what was at stake in the analysis—was to see the extent to which we could accept that the analysis of micro-powers, or of procedures of governmentality, is not confined by definition to a precise domain determined by a sector of the scale, but should be considered simply as a point of view, a method of decipherment which may be valid for the whole scale, whatever its size. In other words, the analysis of micro-powers is not a question of scale, and it is not a question of a sector, it is a question of a point of view[369].

As Jessop remarks, the work of Foucault is *scalable*, meaning that it "can be applied to the state, statecraft, state-civil society, or state-economy relations just as fruitfully as to the conduct of conduct at the level of inter-personal interactions, organizations, or individual institutions"[370]. In a sense, in these

[367] Jessop (2010), p. 62.
[368] *Ivi*, pp. 62-63.
[369] Foucault (2008), p. 186. Cited in Jessop (2010), p. 63.
[370] Jessop (2010), p. 63.

1978-79 lectures there is a shit of perspective from a micro-physical focus on power to a macro-physical concern with government; to rephrase, it is a question of perspective, of adjusting the analysis to different objects (the body, the state, and so forth).

3.2 *Why* and *how* power should be resisted? Gramsci and Foucault: a complementarity hypothesis

I think that the analyses I carried out in the second part of my dissertation, concerning the anthropology of human capital, Human Resource Management techniques and practices, Personal Enterprise as a contemporary form of wisdom, and, more generally, the production of neoliberal subjectivities, need to maintain a link with the "bigger picture", that is to say, with the macro-level of institutions, classes and societies, and return to focus on a paramount aspect (too often forgotten) of critical thinking: *social transformation through resistance*.

By adopting a more general and critical point of view, it is possible to avoid both the "dispersion effects" caused by a focus on the micro-analysis of power and the above-mentioned errors of Anglo-Foucauldian governmentality studies. Indeed, Anglophone neo-Foucauldian scholars, such as Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose[371] and Mitchell Dean[372], focus their analyses around "Foucault's answers to the question of 'how' governance occurs and they have neglected the 'why' questions related to dynamics of socio-economic transformation"[373].

For several reasons, at this point of my reasoning, it might be productive to attempt a dialogue between some aspects of the work of Antonio Gramsci and that of Michel Foucault. After a methodological introduction, I shall: *first, investigate the possibility of a theoretical position different from that of a mere* aut-aut*, which might be called* a complementarity hypothesis*; second, compare*

---

[371] E.g. cf. P. Miller and N. Rose (1990). 'Governing economic life'. *Economy and Society*, 19 (1), pp. 1–31. Cf. also Rose and Miller (2008).
[372] Cf. M. Dean (1999). *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London, SAGE.
[373] N-L. Sum and B. Jessop (2013). *Towards a cultural political economy: putting culture in its place in political economy*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, p. 205.

the Gramscian notion of "subaltern" groups *with the Foucauldian analysis of* "subjugated knowledges*"; third, explore the possibility of a theory of social transformation through a notion of* resistance *which draws both from Gramsci and Foucault.*

First of all, it is important to underline that a neo-Gramscian approach maintains the *generative* aspects of power, and not just the repressive ones, as in standard neo-Marxist narratives (which I have criticized above); this productive understanding of power was insightfully investigated by Foucault, who managed to unveil a "complex mechanisms of disciplinary normalization and governmentalization, already anticipated in some of Gramsci's work on Americanism and Fordism"[374]. In brief, both Gramsci and Foucault understood relations of power "as functioning positively – that is, constituting practices, culture, and language – and thus as not solely negative in their operation; and as not functioning solely in a top-down manner"[375].

However, unlike Foucault, Gramsci argued that there are "structures and superstructures [that] form an 'historical bloc'", asserting that "the complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble of the superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production"[376]. Gramsci articulated the concept of *hegemony* as something different from a "power from within", understood in Foucauldian terms, which allows a return to a critique of political economy in a Marxian sense. As Sum and Jessop put it, reflecting on the Gramscian notion of "*mercato determinato*", "[c]lass domination, expressed through state power, involves a variable mix of hegemony and coercion and, while

374 N-L. Sum (2015). 'Rethinking the Gramsci–Foucault Interface: A Cultural Political Economy Interpretation Oriented to Discourses of Competitiveness'. In D. Kreps and S. Gill. *Gramsci and Foucault: A Reassessment*. Farnham, Surrey, UK, Ashgate, p. 38.
375 J. Swanson (2009). 'Gramsci as theorist of politics'. *Rethinking Marxism,* 21(3), p. 341.
376 A. Gramsci (1971). *Selections From The Prison Notebooks Of Antonio Gramsci.* Trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, New York, International Publishers, p. 366.

it has a decisive economic nucleus, hegemony depends on the creation and diffusion of an appropriate common sense"[377].

An important point in Gramsci is that he "takes issue with economism, and argues that it is merely a crude parody of Marxism to portray it as holding that all political action can be explained as a result of economic interests"[378]. To wit, Gramsci is decisively critical of oversimplified readings of Marxism, which understand power in economic terms and the possibility of social change related only to the control of the material means of production. *In Gramsci's perspective, if subaltern groups wish to free themselves from the condition of subordination, they have to get beyond the level of economic interest, "and establish their capacity to lead in the sphere of ideas"*[379]. Gramsci invokes Lenin (referred to as "Ilyich" throughout the *Prison Notebooks*) to explain that his concept of hegemony

> should be regarded as Ilyich's greatest contribution to Marxist philosophy, to historical materialism: an original and creative contribution. In this respect, Ilyich advanced Marxism not only in political theory and economics but also in philosophy (that is, by advancing political theory, he also advanced philosophy)[380].

Therefore, *politics is the paramount field of struggle to establish hegemony (or counter-hegemony), which is a task to be carried out, according to Gramsci, by the political party, the "Modern Prince"*[381]. The party must express and organize the *collective will*, it must be a "Jacobin" force which rejects economism, syndicalism, spontaneism[382]. The important contribution of

---

377 Sum and Jessop (2013), p. 206.
378 J. Schwarzmantel (2015). *The Routledge Guidebook to Gramsci's Prison Notebooks*. Abingdon, Oxon, Routledge, p. 163.
379 Schwarzmantel (2015), p. 166.
380 Cited in *ibidem*.
381 Cf. *ivi,* p. 167.
382 Cf. *ibidem*.

Gramsci is precisely that of deepen the notion of *struggle*, understanding it in terms of culture and ideology, developing an original position compared to rigid Marxism-Leninism and Soviet orthodoxy[383].

Of course, there are major problems when comparing the work of Gramsci with that of Foucault, especially when it comes to the notion of "hegemony". I think that David Kreps summarizes this issue correctly when he argues:

> From a classical Marxist perspective, Foucault's use of such terms as hegemony sets up inescapable inconsistencies; from a poststructuralist perspective, the totalizing – and scientistic – approach of Marxist historical materialism completely fails to appreciate the far more nuanced, pervasive understanding of power as situated in discursive contexts[384].

This major issue has to do with the contrasting theoretical starting points of Gramsci and Foucault. Despite the fact that Gramsci adopts an original position with regard to orthodox Marxism, there remain some basic incompatibilities between Gramsci and Foucault, mainly concerning the different methods of these two thinkers. In my subparagraph 'A Marxist-Foucauldian perspective?' I already highlighted some of these problems with regard to a series of syntheses of Marx and Foucault attempted by many scholars. As Barnett remarks, these two perspectives are not easy to reconcile, as "[t]hey imply different models of the nature of explanatory concepts; different models of causality and determination; different models of social relations and agency; and different normative understandings of political power"[385]. For this reason, it is important not to oversimplify the possibility of a nexus by introducing Foucault in neo-Marxist narratives of neoliberalism-as-hegemony, understanding

[383] Cf. Schwarzmantel (2015), p. 289.
[384] D. Kreps (2015). 'Introduction'. In Kreps and Gill, p. 4.
[385] Barnett (2005), p. 8.

"neoliberalism" as "discourse", yet using this concept instrumentally "as a synonym for ideology"[386]. Further, one should pay attention to not instrumentalise the concept of "governmentality" by using it "to explain how broad macro-structural shifts from state regulation to market regulation are modulated with the micro-contexts of everyday routines"[387].

That said, however, one might challenge Barnett position, which criticises conversations between Gramscians and Foucauldians for being "naïve, theoretically clumsy, and politically confused"[388] by asking:

> [I]s it merely that the two thinkers focused upon differing aspects of a wider picture that do not exclude each other? Does Foucault's concentration upon the micro-politics in society that add up to and constitute the central figure of the State undermine and discount, or complement and mirror Gramsci's concentration on the hegemonic reach of that centre out into the minutiae of social relations?[389]

Reconciling a Gramscian and a Foucauldian perspective is far beyond my aims, yet I would like to introduce the possibility of an alternative position, arguing that *the brilliant insights of these two thinkers are more meaningful and productive if taken together, in a complementary manner, rather than in isolation*. As Joan Cocks insightfully remarked (as early as 1989):

> There are [between Gramsci and Foucault] certain striking thematic repetitions, certain similar analytical obsessions – certain ways, too, in which their arguments and insights are reciprocally illuminating. What is flawed in each argument alone, moreover, is improved by the selective combination of the arguments together. For in some cases there is too great a faith in

[386] *Ivi*, p. 9.
[387] *Ibidem*.
[388] M. Ekers and A. Loftus (2008). 'The power of water: Developing dialogues between Foucault and Gramsci'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26, p. 699. Cited in Kreps and Gill (2015), p. 2.
[389] D. Kreps (2015). 'Introduction'. In Kreps and Gill, p. 2.

> subjective agency, in others too great an emphasis on objective determination. Some defend an overly centrist strategy of resistance, others an overly localist one. In certain arguments we find a naïve esteem for a final harmony in social relations, and in others, a hypertrophied sensitivity to the possibilities of repression in any collective way of life[390].

Kreps uses the metaphor of *complexity* to ask a stimulating and challenging question: "Could hegemony emerge from the micro-politics of the individual?"[391] This is an extremely difficult and interesting question to answer, and much work remains to be done. However, *the possibility, envisaged by Gramsci, for subaltern groups to develop a counter-hegemonic set of ideas and practices remain a paramount aspect to make sense of politics in the post-2008 neoliberal world; to rephrase, understanding, shaping and organizing the collective will of subaltern movements remain the fundamental aim of politics (and, therefore, of struggle), even now that the collective will is not that of a unified industrial working class, yet rather that of a fragmented and complex variety of individual aspirations for a better, less precarious life, and more just society*[392].

For example, the resistance movement "Occupy Wall Street", started in 2011 with an idea of the Canadian anti-consumerist organization Adbusters, managed to gather together not only unemployed people and students, yet also a great variety of other individuals: according to a survey by Douglas Schoen, in October 2011, 53 percent of Zuccotti Park campers described themselves as employed full time, "18 percent part time, 14 percent as students, and 15 percent unemployed"[393]. For this reason, it *is not easy to define the clear purposes and the key players of the movement*. Indeed, from the first official release of the

---

[390] J. Cocks (1989). *The Oppositional Imagination: Feminism, Critique and Political Theory*. London, Routledge, p. 26. Cited in Kreps and Gill (2015), p. 1.
[391] Kreps (2015), p. 178.
[392] Cf. Schwarzmantel (2015), p. 291.
[393] A. Berger (2015). 'Occupy Wall Street overview'. *Salem Press Encyclopedia*.

Occupy Wall Street movement, the *Declaration of the Occupation of New York City*, one can read:

> As we gather together in solidarity to express a feeling of mass injustice, we must not lose sight of what brought us together. [...]
>
> As one people, united, we acknowledge the reality: that the future of the human race requires the cooperation of its members; that our system must protect our rights, and upon corruption of that system, it is up to the individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbors; that a democratic government derives its just power from the people, but corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the Earth; and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power. We come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments. We have peaceably assembled here, as is our right, to let these facts be known.
>
> - They have taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process, despite not having the original mortgage.
> - They have taken bailouts from taxpayers with impunity, and continue to give Executives exorbitant bonuses.
> - They have perpetuated inequality and discrimination in the workplace based on age, the color of one's skin, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.
> - They have poisoned the food supply through negligence, and undermined the farming system through monopolization.
> - They have profited off of the torture, confinement, and cruel treatment of countless nonhuman animals, and actively hide these practices.
> - They have continuously sought to strip employees of the right to negotiate for better pay and safer working conditions.
> - They have held students hostage with tens of thousands of dollars of debt on education, which is itself a human right.
> - [...]
> - They determine economic policy, despite the catastrophic failures their policies have produced and continue to produce.

- [...][394]

And the list goes on with other 15 points. Indeed, given that the movement, according to its powerful slogan, wish to represent "the 99%" ("they" being the 1%) and aim to identify changes capable of "shifting our society's wealth back to the 99%"[395], it is no surprise that there exist such a variety of claims within the movement.

Both Gramsci and Foucault are concerned with the nature of power, the way it is organized and the possibility of resistance to dominant forces. However, there is a *fundamental difference in context*: Gramsci is writing in prison in Italy during Fascism, where Mussolini is leading a repressive dictatorship, while attempting to expand the Italian colonial empire; given this framework, identities seem easier to identify, and categories can be developed "that fit into a structural analysis of the class struggle"[396]. On the other hand, Foucault develops his analyses in a postcolonial democracy, the French Fifth Republic, where identities are fragmented and confused, and the concept of "class" itself is contested as the only place of struggle[397].

A number of similarities have been identified on this topic: Esteve Morera suggests a "connection between hegemony and the truth regime, on the resistance of subjugated knowledges to universalizing history, on the body, the place of religion, and conflict"[398]. Further, Jacind Swanson[399], reviewing *Language and*

---

394 Occupywallst.org (2011). 'First Official Release From Occupy Wall Street', accessed 20 January 2016, http://occupywallst.org/forum/first-official-release-from-occupy-wall-street/.
395 F. Korten (2011). 'Foreword'. In S. Van Gelder. *This Changes Everything: Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement*. San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
396 S. Sarker (2015). 'Subalternity In and Out of Time, In and Out of History'. In Kreps and Gill, p. 91.
397 *Ibidem*.
398 *Ivi,* p. 95. Cf. E. Morera (2000). 'Gramsci's critical modernity'. *Rethinking Marxism,* 12(1), pp. 16–46.
399 Cf. J. Swanson (2009). 'Gramsci as theorist of politics'. *Rethinking Marxism,* 21(3), pp. 336–43.

hegemony in Gramsci (2004) by Peter Ives, shows "similarities in Gramsci's approaches to poststructuralism in that he rejected the idea of a non-subjective world"[400]. *Yet maybe the most relevant similarity here has to do with the way Gramsci studies "subaltern" groups (e.g. in relation to Sicilian subalternity), and Foucault analyses "subjugated knowledges".*

Gramsci affirms that

> [t]he historical unity of the ruling classes is realised in the State, and their history is essentially the history of States and of groups of States. [...] The subaltern classes, by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a 'State': their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil society, and thereby with the history of States and groups of States[401].

According to Gramsci, the history of subaltern social groups, which is "necessarily fragmented and episodic"[402], has to be studied by focusing on six elements to understand "the actions of subaltern groups in relation to hegemonic history in the form of the state"[403]. Within this paradigm, therefore, there exist the official and legitimate version of history (the hegemonic history of the state and groups of states), and "the 'other' (subaltern groups) are represented as living

---

[400] Sarker (2015), p. 95.
[401] Gramsci (1971), p. 52.
[402] *Ivi*, p. 54-55.
[403] Sarker (2015), p. 97. According to Gramsci, "it is necessary to study: 1. the objective formation of the subaltern social groups, by the developments and transformations occurring in the sphere of economic production; their quantitative diffusion and their origins in pre-existing social groups, whose mentality, ideology and aims they conserve for a time; 2. their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations, their attempts to influence the programmes of these formations in order to press claims of their own, and the consequences of these attempts in determining processes of decomposition, renovation or neo-formation; 3. the birth of new parties of the dominant groups, intended to conserve the assent of the subaltern groups and to maintain control over them; 4. The formations which the subaltern groups themselves produce, in order to press claims of a limited and partial character; 5. those new formations which assert the autonomy of the subaltern groups, but within the old framework; 6. those formations which assert the integral autonomy, [...] etc." Gramsci (1971), p. 52.

in an-other history"[404]. An-other history, an-other time is the place where un-official, counter-hegemonic struggle take place. Episodic and fragmented is therefore the nature of the struggles of the subaltern groups. As Sonita Sarker puts it:

> [N]ormative (in Gramsci's vocabulary, hegemonic) identity universalizes itself as the possessor of history and invests itself with the power to particularize its 'others' (of which 'subaltern' is one) as non-normative and living outside history, in the unstructured stream called time. These 'others' are particularized in terms of their ethnicized, gendered, sexualized, or class category, e.g., the Sardinian, the woman, the worker, to name some[405].

On the other hand, Foucault is concerned with the "*insurrection of subjugated knowledges*".

> By subjugated knowledges I mean two things: on the one hand, I am referring to the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemisation. [...] On the other hand, I believe that by subjugated knowledges one should understand something else, [...] namely, *a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate* to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. I also believe that it is through the re-emergence of these low-ranking knowledges, these unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledges [...] and which involve what I would call a popular knowledge (*le savoir des gens*) though it is far from being a general commonsense knowledge, but is on the contrary a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it – that it is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular

[404] Sarker (2015), p. 97.
[405] *Ivi*, p. 98.

> knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work[406] [the italics is mine].

Foucault uses a genealogy approach to entail the "coupling together of scholarly erudition and local memories, which allows us to constitute the *historical knowledge of struggles* and to make use of that knowledge in contemporary tactics"[407] [the italics is mine].

I think that the Occupy Wall Street movement can be defined, in Gramscian terms, as a *counter-hegemonic struggle*[408]*,* to wit, as a movement within the framework of an-other history: the "episodic and fragmented" history of subaltern social groups, which is dismissed by the "official" hegemonic history in the form of the state. But the Occupy movement can also be read within the framework of a Foucauldian *insurrection of subjugated knowledges*. Indeed, the claims of the protesters have been dismissed, in Foucauldian terms, as a set of "local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges"[409] and clear attempts have been made to lessen the theoretical bases of the movement by using "the unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them [the theoretical bases and claims of Occupy Wall Street] in the name of some true knowledge"[410].

Mike Brownfield, for example, dismissed the movement by arguing that "the policies that the Occupy Wall Street protesters are advocating – and their rejection of the capitalist system – won't make the economy any better for the 14 million unemployed Americans and all those who are struggling in this stagnant

---

406 Foucault (1980), pp. 81-2.
407 M. Foucault, M. Bertani and A. Fontana (2003). *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-76*. Trans. D. Macey, New York, Picador, p. 8.
408 Despite the fact that Gramsci never used this term, neo-Gramscian Nicola Pratt has defined counter-hegemony as "a creation of an alternative hegemony on the terrain of civil society in preparation for political change". N. Pratt (2004). 'Bringing Politics Back In: Examining the Link Between Globalization and Democratization'. *Review of International Political Economy,* 11 (2), p. 332.
409 Foucault (1980), p. 83
410 *Ibidem*.

economy. In fact, many of the demands voiced by the protesters are outright dangerous and would send us further from their own stated goal of improving economic conditions for the '99 percent' [...] there's a better way to solve the problem – the government should do no more harm, get out of the way, and let private, free enterprise work."[411]. Yet I am also referring to a series of conservative criticisms to the movement, namely: "it is a 'growing mob' (House majority leader Eric Cantor) of 'shiftless protestors' (The Tea Party Express) engaged in 'class warfare' (GOP presidential candidate Herman Cain) whose grievances - whatever they are - are far outside the political mainstream"[412]. Or this Tea Party statement: "those occupying Wall Street and other cities, when they are intelligible, want less of what made America great and more of what is damaging to America: a bigger, more powerful government to come in and take care of them so they don't have to work like the rest of us who pay our bills"[413]. In another article, Matthew Continetti asserts that conservatives "dismiss the movement as a fringe collection of left tendencies, along with assorted homeless, mental cases, and petty criminals"[414].

Despite the above-mentioned similarities between Gramsci and Foucault, which allow a sort of partial theoretical juxtaposition, it is important to bear in mind the fundamental differences, outlined above, about their respective methods and critical perspectives, not to mention the difference in context. Indeed, *Foucault has a more nuanced and sophisticated manner of understanding relations of power,* not just in terms of classes: "power is

---

411 M. Brownfield (2011). 'Morning Bell: Wall Street Is The Wrong Place To Occupy'. *The Daily Signal*, accessed 20 January 2016, http://dailysignal.com/2011/10/18/morning-bell-wall-street-is-the-wrong-place-to-occupy/.

412 B. Montopoli (2011). 'Occupy Wall Street: More Popular Than You Think'. *Cbsnews,* accessed 20 January 2016, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/occupy-wall-street-more-popular-than-you-think/.

413 M. Gould and D. Patten (2011). 'Tea Party Launches Attacks On 'Occupy Wall Street''. *Newsmax*, accessed 20 January 2016, http://www.newsmax.com/InsideCover/tea-party-wall-street/2011/10/13/id/414367/.

414 M. Continetti (2011). 'The Roots Of American Disorder', *Cbsnews,* accessed 20 January 2016, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-roots-of-american-disorder/.

ubiquitous and infused in everyday discourses"[415]. *Foucault describes power as something that can potentially take countless shapes, yet the drawback is that these forms of power "are so pervasive and difficult to contest that they often seem to preclude any hope of resistance"*[416].

In a lecture at the Collège the France, in 1976, Foucault describes *four types of power* or, better, "the four operations that we see at work in a fairly detailed study of what we call disciplinary power": "selection, normalization, hierarchicalization, and centralization"[417]. The panoptic organization of the prisons, and of the society in general, is therefore a popular, yet *non-exhaustive* model, to understand how modern relations of power work according to Foucault. Indeed, the "panopticon illustrates selection, as those subjected to observation are selected to be administered by a prison or some other institution employing this model of control. It also shows hierarchalization and centralization, since those being observed are neatly arranged in space and are monitored by a central authority"[418]. However, normalization is a more difficult process to grasp, "as it operates even when there is no clear relationship between those administering power and those subjected to it"[419]. As it is clear from the section "Neoliberal subjectivity" of my dissertation, *the processes of normalization induce individuals to act in complicity with the suppression of resistance* (e.g. by acting as they were enterprises, as described in 'A contemporary perspective on neoliberal governmentality: Human Resource Management').

Further, in Foucault's narrative, power is non-intentional, it cannot be explicitly used over an individual or a group:

---

[415] M. Schulzke (2015). 'Power and Resistance: Linking Gramsci and Foucault'. In Kreps and Gill, p. 57.
[416] *Ivi*, p. 58.
[417] Foucault, Bertani and Fontana (2003), p. 181.
[418] Schulzke (2015), p. 59.
[419] *Ibidem*.

> Power is not something that is divided between those who have it and hold it exclusively, and those who do not have it and are subject to it. Power must, I think, be analyzed as something that circulates, or rather as something that functions only when it is part of a chain. It is never localized here or there, it is never in the hands of some, and it is never appropriated in the way that wealth or a commodity can be appropriated[420].

From this complex account of power according to Foucault, it emerges that *it is impossible to escape the relational web of powers*; to rephrase, *it is impossible to act, or even to think, in a manner capable of transcend relations of power*. For this reason,

> [g]iven the pervasiveness of power, and the ways in which it constitutes identities, social relations, and knowledge itself, it is difficult to account for how people can be capable of any kind of autonomous action. Many interpretations of Foucault's theory of power describe Foucault as a pessimistic theorist who emphasizes the myriad ways in which individuals are subjected to power and domination without providing a basis for critique or action[421].

This is, indeed, a critical point in Foucault theorization. *On the one hand, he develops a sophisticated and deep understanding of relations of power, yet, on the other, he describes an individual which is totally powerless and incapable of resistance.* As Charles Taylor puts it, studying the Foucauldian notion of *regime of truth*,

> [t]here can be no such thing as a truth independent of its regime, unless it be that of another. *So that liberation in the name of 'truth' could only be the substitution of another system of power for this one*, as indeed the modern course of history has substituted the techniques of control for the royal

[420] Foucault, Bertani and Fontana (2003), p. 29. Cited in Schulzke (2015), p. 59.
[421] Schulzke (2015), p. 60.

> sovereignty which dominated the seventeenth century. [...] Foucault cannot envisage liberating transformations *within* a regime. The regime is entirely identified with its imposed truth. Unmasking can only destabilize it; we cannot bring about a new, stable, freer, less mendacious form of it by this route[422] [the first italics is mine].

Here, it emerges a paramount problem: *if the liberation from a regime of truth can only lead to the substitution of that regime with another one, what is the point of struggle, or resistance? What is the point of resistance if the new regime of truth is no better than the old one, in so far as they both aim to impose a truth ("the regime is entirely identified with its imposed truth") and therefore cannot be judged differently? Why power should be resisted?*[423]

In particular, Nancy Fraser questions

> whether Foucault's rhetoric really does the job of distinguishing better from worse regimes of social practices; whether it really does the job of identifying forms of domination (or whether it overlooks some and/or misrecognizes others); whether it really does the job of distinguishing fruitful from unfruitful, acceptable from unacceptable forms of resistance to domination; and finally, whether it really does the job of suggesting not simply that change is possible but also what sort of change is desirable[424].

In brief, she does not see any difference between freedom and domination in Foucault. This might seem as a radical claim, yet *I think there is a risk of dismissing resistance whenever a satisfactory basis for normative claims is missing*.

---

[422] C. Taylor (1985). 'Foucault on freedom and truth'. In *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2*. New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 178-9.
[423] Cf. Schulzke (2015), p. 60.
[424] N. Fraser (1989). *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 43.

There exist, however, a number of attempts to show that, even when power is understood as something different (and more complex) than mere class domination, individuals are capable, in particular cases, to organize effective resistance. Mari Ruti, for example, explores the possibility of making resistance a personal project: in her reading of Foucault, "power is actively generative rather than merely prohibitory, restrictive, or negating – that it opens the path to the articulation of meanings even as it delimits the field of discursive possibility"[425]. According to Ruti, individuals have the means to challenge power, critically and deliberately forming their identities against normalizing discourses: "Foucault presents a subject who is not merely passively molded by power, but able to dynamically participate in the fashioning of its own subjectivity"[426]. In this sense, individuals are able to transcend the disciplinary apparatus.

The problem with this kind of arguments is that they are in contrast with Foucault's emphasis on production of subjectivities: individuals are overwhelmed with the myriad of manifestations of power and are determined by a variety of normalizing narratives[427]. *Thus, how can a single individual cope with the various types of disciplinary power acting on her/him? How can an individual use power intentionally, given that, according to Foucault, power is beyond individual control?*

A theoretical basis for resistance, which can serve as a partial answer to these questions, can be found in Gramsci. Gramsci links the concept of hegemony with that of "spontaneous" consent, which is "given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group"[428]. Thus, coercion is not exercised except in particular cases,

---

[425] Ruti, M. (2006*). Reinventing the Soul: Posthumanist Theory and Psychic Life*. New York, Other Press, p. 60. Cited in Schulzke (2015), p. 62.
[426] *Ivi*, p. 64.
[427] Cf. Schulzke (2015), p. 62.
[428] Gramsci (1971), p. 12.

against "those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively"[429]. The main objective of hegemony is thus that of securing consent. As Marcus Schulzke puts it, "[l]ike Foucault's disciplinary power, hegemony raises new barriers to resistance. Hegemony is not a unified system, nor are hegemonic values always coherent. Rather, hegemony is a diverse assemblage of institutions and values that can be both complementary and contradictory"[430]. Because of this variety of manifestations, it results particularly difficult to challenge hegemony; further, hegemony can undermine attempts of resistance by incorporating them.

Despite the fact that both Gramsci and Foucault are concerned with the ways institutions exercise power, "Gramsci never goes as far as Foucault in theorizing power as a diffuse entity existing in relationships of surveillance or in normalizing discourses"[431]. Further, differently from Foucault, Gramsci usually links power to a set of interests and intentions, and he thinks it can be used either as an instrument of class domination or as a means of liberation.

Bearing these fundamental differences in mind, it is now possible to recognize a fundamental strength in Gramsci theorization: *unlike Foucault, the Italian political theorist has an advanced explanation of the strategies to employ to carry out resistance and of the agents responsible to perform the task*[432]. Because the individual is overwhelmed by the ubiquity of hegemony in every aspect of social life, resistance can be carried out only collectively by the political party, the Modern Prince:

> The modern prince, the myth-prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual. It can only be an organism, a complex element of society in which a collective will, which has already been recognised and has to some extent asserted itself in action, begins to take concrete form[433].

---

[429] *Ibidem*.
[430] Schulzke (2015), p. 64.
[431] *Ibidem*.
[432] Cf. *Ivi*, p. 65.
[433] Gramsci (1971), p. 129.

Gramsci draws on Machiavelli precisely because he wants to emphasize "the creative role of political leadership (though not in the form of the supposedly charismatic leader or *Duce*) and of politics in general that is not to be reduced to the mere expression of economic forces"[434]. Gramsci has a high consideration of *politics,* which for him is "history in the making and philosophy in the making"[435]; further, he describes the "active politician" as "a creator, an initiator", though one who "neither creates from nothing nor does he move in the turbid void of his own desires and dreams"[436]. According to John Schwarzmantel, "the significance of Gramsci's overall analysis is clear. 'Politics is life' since only through political action could there be movement toward a different kind of society"[437].

The new prince, the political party, is the protagonist of political struggle. Yet Gramsci distinguishes different types of party: first, there is the party "constituted by an elite of men of culture, who have the function of providing leadership of a cultural and general ideological nature for a great movement of interrelated parties (which in reality are fractions of one and the same organic party)"[438]. For this particular case, he is probably referring to Benedetto Croce. Second, he identifies a sort of fascist or Caesaristic party: "in the more recent period, there is a type of party constituted this time not by an elite but by masses-who as such have no other political function than a generic loyalty, of a military kind, to a visible or invisible political centre"[439]. This mass "is kept happy by means of moralising sermons, emotional stimuli, and messianic

---

434 Schwarzmantel (2015), p. 159.
435 Gramsci (1971), p. 171.
436 *Ivi*, p. 172.
437 Schwarzmantel (2015), p. 163. Schwarzmantel continues with Gramsci's criticism of orthodox Marxism, because such movement toward a different kind of society "will not come about in a mechanistic way through the automatic development of economic forces. […] Gramsci takes issue with economism, and argues that it is merely a crude parody of Marxism to portray it as holding that all political action can be explained as a result of economic interests". *Ibidem*.
438 Gramsci (1971), pp. 149-50.
439 *Ivi*, p. 150.

myths of an awaited golden age, in which all present contradictions and miseries will be automatically resolved and made well"[440].

Of course, Gramsci does not identify the modern Prince neither with the elite party nor with the Caesaristic or Facist-type party. "[F]or a party to exist, three fundamental elements (three groups of elements) have to converge"[441]: the mass element, the leadership ("which centralises nationally and renders effective and powerful a complex of forces which left to themselves would count for little or nothing"[442]) and "[a]n intermediate element, which articulates the first element with the second and maintains contact between them, not only physically but also morally and intellectually"[443]. According to Carl Boggs, the party that Gramsci envisages is "a compromise between Leninist vanguardism and anarchist voluntarism, since it attempts to establish a strong leadership without allowing leaders to dominate other members of the organization"[444].

The task of the party is that of establish hegemony (or counter-hegemony) from below, making a collective effort to overcome the hegemony of the ruling class. As Stanley Aronowitz puts it, "under the best of circumstances where the party has sufficient resources, especially cadres, it contests bourgeois hegemony on all fronts, not merely in the sphere of electoral politics"[445]. Marcus Schulzke tries to describe the Gramscian party in Foucauldian terms as "a collective that constantly works to overcome normalizing narratives through the collective efforts of its members acting according to their respective capacities. It also creates new narratives that remake relations of power in more liberating ways."[446].

---

[440] *Ibidem.*
[441] *Ivi,* p. 152.
[442] *Ibidem.*
[443] *Ivi*, p. 153.
[444] Schulzke (2015), p. 66. Cf. C. Boggs (1976). *Gramsci's Marxism*. London, Pluto Press, p. 109.
[445] J. Francese (2009). *Perspectives on Gramsci: Politics, Culture and Social Theory,* New York, Routledge, p. 10. Cited in Schulzke (2015), p. 66.
[446] Schulzke (2015), p. 67.

I think that it is possible to apply the Gramscian theory of the party to overcome some of the challenges, underlined above, of Foucault's theory of power. One of the most critical point was that of understanding how an individual can carry out resistance since s/he is overflowed with normalizing narratives and s/he is not usually conscious of the disciplinary control s/he is subject to. In other words, lone individuals cannot "discover the existence of hidden relations of power, to critically assess the regimes of truth responsible for establishing these relations of power, and to challenge the limits prevailing institutions and values impose"[447]. When Gramsci states that "the modern prince, the myth-prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual"[448], he recognizes, like Foucault, that individuals alone cannot perform the task of resistance against hegemony. However*, a group of individuals acting and thinking together in an effort of collective will are able to overcome these limitations and unveil the mechanisms of power acting on them, organizing their means to produce counter-hegemony*. For both Gramsci and Foucault "resisting hegemony or normalizing narratives depends on recognizing dominant norms and values as being contingent and as reflecting the interests of certain members of society"[449]. However, unlike Foucault, *Gramsci situate resistance at the level of organizations* (in particular, he referred to the party, yet the collective will is not limited to that institution), *which are in a privileged position, compared to lone individuals, for addressing and challenging institutions and values*.

[447] Schulzke (2015), p. 67.
[448] Gramsci (1971), p. 129.
[449] Schulzke (2015), p. 69.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, my aim was to investigate the meaning of neoliberalism, trying to decipher how it shapes our world. Clearly, a too wide-ranging target. For methodological reasons, I had to focus only on a limited number of interpretations of neoliberalism. However, by considering an ample variety of sources, I think I have highlighted several important characteristics of this multifaceted phenomenon.

As I have showed, today neoliberalism is frequently used as an all-purpose denunciatory category, as a concept oft-invoked but ill-defined, and it risks to lose its explanatory potential. In the recent past, it was employed to announce the end of Keynesianism and Socialism, suggesting that neoliberal policies are the only plausible solutions to cope with new economic problems, since there is no viable alternative to neoliberal capitalism. However, according to some scholars, neoliberalism indicates the peculiar, and not particularly performant, doctrine of the Anglo-Saxon economies. For neo-Marxists, on the other hand, it signifies the rising ideology of contemporary global capitalism. Finally, for Foucault and Foucauldian scholars, it indicates a new form of governmentality, a new regime of truth.

Clearly, it emerges that these approaches to understand the same phenomenon are not always compatible with each other, and in some cases they are in overt contrast. From my dissertation, it emerges that neo-Marxist theorizations highlight a number of crucial points of this phenomenon, yet their limit consists primarily in the understanding of power as essentially repressive. In this way, I think, they do not grasp the novelty of neoliberalism. Foucault and several Foucauldian scholars, on the contrary, decipher with insight the generative aspects of this phenomenon, its techniques of power over conduct and subjectivities.

There remain, however, several challenges to fully understand neoliberalism. I think that a key aspect, in this sense, is to pursue a dialogue between different perspectives. Different ways of understanding the same phenomenon need to engage with each other, in order to find more complex and satisfying theories. In this respect, I attempted as a conclusion a dialogue between Gramsci and Foucault on a number of aspects concerning power, resistance and, thus, neoliberalism and the possibility to go beyond it. It contains, I think, a number of interesting insights, which might be considered as starting points for further research.

References

AMABLE, B. (2003). *The diversity of modern capitalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

AUBREY, B. (2000a). *L'entreprise De Soi*. Paris, Flammarion.

AUBREY, B. (2000b). 'L'entreprise de soi, un nouvel âge' [interview]. *Autrement*, 192.

AUBREY, B. and L. COHEN (1994). *Le Travail Apre`s La Crise*. Paris, InterEditions.

AUBREY, B. and B. TILLIETTE (1990). *Savoir Faire Savoir*. Paris, InterEditions.

BARBER, B. R. (2008). *Consumed. How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole*. New York, W. W. Norton & Company.

BAUMAN, Z. (2012). 'Foreword to the 2012 Edition Liquid Modernity Revisited'. In *Liquid Modernity* [eBook]. Cambridge, UK, Polity Press.

BARNETT, C. (2005). 'The consolations of 'neoliberalism''. *Geoforum*, 36(1), pp. 7–12.

BEHRENT, M. C. (2009). 'Liberalism Without Humanism: Michel Foucault And The Free-market Creed, 1976–1979'. *Modern Intellectual History*, 6(03), pp. 539-568.

BERGAMI, M. (1996). *L'identificazione con l'impresa. Comportamenti individuali e processi organizzativi*. Rome, La Nuova Italia Scientifica.

BERGER, A. (2015). 'Occupy Wall Street overview'. *Salem Press Encyclopedia*.

BOAS, T. C. and J. GANS-MORSE. (2009). 'Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan'. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 44(2), pp. 137-161.

BOLDIZZONI, D. (2007). *Management delle risorse umane. Dalla gestione del lavoratore dipendente alla valorizzazione del capitale umano*. Milan, Il Sole-24 ore.

BONEFELD, W. (2013). 'German ordo-liberalism and the politics of vitality'. *Renewal*, 20(4), pp. 35-39.

BROWN, W. (2003). 'Neo-Liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy'. *Theory & Event*, 7(1), pp. 1–29.

BROWN, W. (2006). 'American nightmare: Neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism, and de-democratization'. *Political Theory*, 34(6), pp. 690–714.

BROWNFIELD, M. (2011). 'Morning Bell: Wall Street Is The Wrong Place To Occupy'. *The Daily Signal*, accessed 20 January 2016, http://dailysignal.com/2011/10/18/morning-bell-wall-street-is-the-wrong-place-to-occupy/.

BURCHELL, G., C. GORDON and P. MILLER (1991). *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmental Rationality*. Trans. C. Gordon. Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

CERVARI, P. and N. POLLASTRI (2010). *Il Filosofo in Azienda. Pratiche filosofiche per le organizzazioni.* Milan, Apogeo.

CLEAVER, H. (1989). 'Close the IMF, abolish debt and end development: a class analysis of the international debt crisis'. *Capital & Class*, 13(3), pp. 17-50.

COCKS, J. (1989). *The Oppositional Imagination: Feminism, Critique and Political Theory*. London, Routledge.

CONTINETTI, M. (2011). 'The Roots Of American Disorder', *Cbsnews,* accessed 20 January 2016, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-roots-of-american-disorder/.

CORBRIDGE, S. (1993). *Debt and development*. Oxford, Blackwell.

COSTA, G. and M. GIANECCHINI (2005). *Risorse umane. Persone, relazioni e valore*. Milan, McGraw-Hill.

CROUCH, C. (2011). *The Strange Non-Death Of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, UK, Polity Press.

DARDOT, P. and C. LAVAL (2013). *The new way of the world: on neoliberal society* [PDF]. Trans. G. Elliott, London, Verso.

DEAN, J. (2008). 'Enjoying neoliberalism'. *Cultural Politics,* 4(1), pp. 47–72.

DEAN, M. (2010). 'A response to the question 'What is neoliberalism?''. Paper presented to 'Contesting Neoliberalism and its Future', *Australian Academy of the Social Sciences Workshop*, University of Sydney.

DEAN, M. (1994). *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology*. London, Routledge.

DEAN, M. (1999). *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London, SAGE.

DREYFUS H. L., P. RABINOW and M. FOUCAULT (1983). *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

DREZNER, D. W. (2001). 'Globalization and Policy Convergence'. *International Studies Review*, 3(1), pp. 53-78.

DUME´NIL, G. and D. LE´VY (2004). *Capital Resurgent: Roots of the Neoliberal Revolution*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.

DUME´NIL, G. and D. LE´VY (2011). *The Crisis of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.

DUNLEAVY, P. and B. O'LEARY (1987). *Theories of the State: The Politics of Liberal Democracy*. Basingstoke, Macmillan Education.

EBENSTEIN, A. (2001). *Friedrich Hayek*. New York, Palgrave.

EKERS, M. and LOFTUS, A. (2008). 'The power of water: Developing dialogues between Foucault and Gramsci'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26, pp. 698–718.

FISHER, M. and J. GILBERT (2013). 'Capitalist Realism and Neoliberal Hegemony: A Dialogue'. *New Formations*, 80(1), pp. 89-101.

FLEW, T. (2012). 'Michel Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics* and Contemporary Neo-Liberalism Debates'. *Thesis Eleven,* 108(1), pp. 44-65.

FLEW, T. (2014). 'Six Theories Of Neoliberalism'. *Thesis Eleven*, 122(1), pp. 49-71.

FOUCAULT, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings*. Trans. C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham, K. Soper, New York, Pantheon Books.

FOUCAULT, M. (2000). *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984: Volume Three*. Trans. R. Hurley, New York, New Press.

FOUCAULT, M. and M SENELLART (2007). *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78*. Trans. G. Burchell, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

FOUCAULT, M., M. BERTANI and A. FONTANA (2003). *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-76*. Trans. D. Macey, New York, Picador.

FOUCAULT, M. and M. SENELLART (2008). *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*. Trans. G. Burchell, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

FOUCAULT, M. and A. DAVIDSON (2011). *The courage of truth*. Trans. G. Burchell, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

FOUCAULT, M. and F. GROS (2005). *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*: *Lectures at the Collège the France, 1981-82*. Trans. A. I. Davidson, New York, Palgrave-Macmillan.

FOUCAULT, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. *Volume 1*. Trans. R. Hurley, New York, Pantheon Books.

FRASER, N. (1989). *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

FUKUYAMA, F. (1989). 'The End of History?'. *National Interest*.

FUKUYAMA, F. (1992). *The end of history and the last man*. New York, Free Press.

GALASSO, G. (2016). 'La Società Liquida Categoria Ingannevole'. *Corriere Della Sera*, accessed 26 January 2016, http://www.corriere.it/opinioni/16_gennaio_27/societa-liquida-categoria-ingannevole-5b4e056c-c466-11e5-8e0c-7baf441d5d56.shtml.

GILDER, G. F. (1994). 'Freedom from Welfare Dependency'. *Religion and Liberty*, 4(2), accessed 23 November 2015, http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-4-number-2/freedom-welfare-dependency.

GIROUX, H. A. (2010). 'Public Values, Higher Education and the Scourge of Neoliberalism: Politics at the Limits of the Social'. *Culture Machine*, accessed 16 October 2015, http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/article/view/426/444.

GOULD, M. and D. PATTEN (2011). 'Tea Party Launches Attacks On 'Occupy Wall Street''. *Newsmax*, accessed 20 January 2016, http://www.newsmax.com/InsideCover/tea-party-wall-street/2011/10/13/id/414367/.

GRAMSCI, A. (1971). *Selections From The Prison Notebooks Of Antonio Gramsci*. Trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, New York, International Publishers.

GUALA, F. (2006). 'Critical Notice: Michel Foucault's Naissance de la Biopolitique'. *Economics And Philosophy*, 22(3), pp. 429-440.

HALL, S. (2011). 'The Neoliberal Revolution'. *Soundings,* 48(1), pp. 9-28.

HARDIN, C. (2012). 'Finding The 'Neo' In Neoliberalism'. *Cultural Studies*, 28(2), pp. 199-221.

HARDOON, D., S. AYELE and R. FUENTES-NIEVA (2016). 'An Economy for the 1%: How privilege and power in the economy drive extreme inequality and how this can be stopped'. *Oxfam Briefing Paper 210*, accessed 26 January 2016, http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/bp210-economy-one-percent-tax-havens-180116-en.pdf.

HARTWICH, O. M. (2009). 'Neoliberalism: The Genesis of a Political Swearword'. *The Centre for Independent Studies*, CIS Occasional Paper 114, pp. 1-28.

HARVEY, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

HARVEY, D. (2003). *The New Imperialism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

HAYEK, F. A. VON (1976). *The Constitution of Liberty*. London, Routledge.

HAYEK, F. A. VON (1944), *The Road to Serfdom*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

HOOGENDIJK, A. (1991). *Filosofie Voor Managers*. Amsterdam, Veen.

JACQUES, M. (2009). *When China rules the world: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*. New York, Penguin Press.

JESSOP, B. (2010). 'Another Foucault effect? Foucault on governmentality and statecraft'. In U. Bröckling, S. Krasmann and T. Lemke. *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*. New York, Routledge, pp. 56-73.

KEMPA, M. and A. SINGH (2008). 'Private Security, Political Ecoomy and the Policing of Race: Probing global hypotheses through the case of South Africa'. *Theoretical Criminology*, 12(3), pp. 333–354.

KIPNIS, A. (2007). 'Neoliberalism reified: *suzhi* discourse and tropes of neoliberalism in the People's Republic of China'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13(2), pp. 383-400.

KLEIN, N. (2007). *The Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York, Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt.

KORINEK, A. 'Brief Biography Of Joseph E. Stiglitz', *Columbia.Edu*, accessed 31 October 2015, https://www0.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty/jstiglitz/bio.cfm.

KREPS, D. and S. GILL (2015). *Gramsci and Foucault: A Reassessment*. Farnham, Surrey, UK, Ashgate.

LATOUR, B. (2004). 'Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern'. *Critical Inquiry*, 30(2), pp. 225-248.

LEMKE, T. (2001). ''The Birth of Bio-Politics': Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège de France on Neo-Liberal Governmentality'. *Economy and Society,* 30(2), pp. 190-207.

MARX, K. (1977). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, accessed 5 November 2015, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/index.htm.

MARX, K. (1990). *Capital: Volume 1*. Trans. B. Fowkes, Harmondsworth, Penguin Classics.

MARX, K. and F. ENGELS (1998). *The German Ideology: including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*. New York, Prometheus Books.

MARENGO, S. (2015). 'La razionalità neoliberale. Antropologia del capitale umano a partire da Michel Foucault'. *Etica & Politica/Ethics & Politics*, 17(1), pp. 205-228.

MILLER, P. and N. ROSE (1990). 'Governing economic life'. *Economy and Society*, 19 (1), pp. 1–31.

MILLER, T. (2010). 'Michel Foucault, The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978–79'. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 16(1), pp. 56–57.

MIROWSKI P. and D. PLEHWE (2009). *The road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of Neoliberal Thought Collective*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

MISES, L. VON (1951). *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

MONTOPOLI, B. (2011). 'Occupy Wall Street: More Popular Than You Think'. *Cbsnews,* accessed 20 January 2016, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/occupy-wall-street-more-popular-than-you-think/.

MORERA, E. (2000). 'Gramsci's critical modernity'. *Rethinking Marxism,* 12(1), pp. 16–46.

MORGAN, G. (2009). 'Globalization, multinationals and institutional diversity'. *Economy and Society*, 38(4), pp. 580-605.

MUDGE, S. L. (2008). 'The State of the Art: What is neo-liberalism?'. *Socio-Economic Review*, 6(4), pp. 703-731.

MUELLER, J. (2014). 'Did History End? Assessing the Fukuyama Thesis'. *Political Science Quarterly,* 129(1), pp. 35-54.

NELSON, R. R. (2011). 'The Complex Economic Organization Of Capitalist Economies', *Capitalism And Society* 6(1), pp. 1-24.

NICOLI, M. (2012). 'Io sono un'impresa. Biopolitica e capitale umano'. *Aut Aut*, 365, pp. 85-99.

NONINI, D. M. (2008). 'Is China Becoming Neoliberal?'. *Critique of Anthropology*, 28(2), pp. 145-176.

O'CONNOR, B. (2002). 'Policies, Principles, And Polls: Bill Clinton's Third Way Welfare Politics 1992-1996'. *Australian Journal Of Politics And History*, 48(3), pp. 396-411.

OCCUPYWALLST.ORG (2011). 'First Official Release From Occupy Wall Street', accessed 20 January 2016, http://occupywallst.org/forum/first-official-release-from-occupy-wall-street/.

OVERBEEK, H. and B. VAN APELDOORN (2012). *Neoliberalism in Crisis*. Chichester, Palgrave Macmillan.

PAGE, B. (2007). 'The shocking truth'. *Bookseller*, 5287, pp. 22-23.

PRATT, N. (2004). 'Bringing Politics Back In: Examining the Link Between Globalization and Democratization'. *Review of International Political Economy,* 11 (2), pp. 311–36.

PUSEY, M. (2010). '25 years of neo-liberalism in Australia'. In Robert Manne and David Mcknight. *Goodbye to All That? On the Failure of Neo-Liberalism and the Urgency of Change*. Melbourne, Black Ink, pp. 125–146.

READ, J. (2009). 'A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity'. *Foucault Studies*, 6, pp. 25-36.

ROSE, N. and P. MILLER (2008). *Governing the Present: Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life*. Cambridge, Polity.

ROSE, N., P. O'MALLEY and M. VALVERDE (2006). 'Governmentality'. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 2, pp. 83–104.

RUTI, M. (2006*). Reinventing the Soul: Posthumanist Theory and Psychic Life*. New York, Other Press.

SAAD-FILHO, A. and D. JOHNSTON (2005). *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader*. London, Pluto Press.

SCHWARZMANTEL, J. (2015). *The Routledge Guidebook to Gramsci's Prison Notebooks*. Abingdon, Oxon, Routledge.

STEDMAN JONES, D. (2012). *Masters of the universe: Hayek, Friedman and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics* [eBook]. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

STEGER, M. B. and R. K. ROY (2010). *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press,

STIGLITZ, J. E. (2002). *Globalization and its Discontents*. New York, W.W. Norton.

STIGLITZ, J. E. (2004). 'The Post Washington Consensus Consensus'. *The Initiative for Policy Dialogue*, Columbia University, accessed 30 October 2015, http://policydialogue.org/files/events/Stiglitz_Post_Washington_Consensus_Paper.pdf.

STIGLITZ, J. E. (2003). *The Roaring Nineties: A New History of the World's Most Prosperous Decade*. New York, W.W. Norton.

SUM, N-L. and B. JESSOP (2013). *Towards a cultural political economy: putting culture in its place in political economy*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

SWANSON, J. (2009). 'Gramsci as theorist of politics'. *Rethinking Marxism,* 21(3), pp. 336–43.

TAYLOR, C. (1985). 'Foucault on freedom and truth'. In *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2*. New York, Cambridge University Press, pp. 152–83.

THATCHER, M. (1981). 'Interview for *Sunday Times*'. *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, accessed 25 November 2015, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104475.

THATCHER, M. (1981). 'Radio Interview For BBC Radio 2 Jimmy Young Programme'. *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, accessed 23 October 2015, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104529.

TOWNLEY, B. (1994). *Reframing Human Resource Management. Power, Ethics and the Subject at Work*. London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi, Sage.

TRIBE, K. (2009). 'The political economy of modernity: Foucault's College de France lectures of 1978 and 1979'. *Economy and Society*, 38(4), pp. 679–698.

VAN GELDER, S. (2011). *This Changes Everything: Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement*. San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

VEGLERIS, E. (2006). *Manager avec la philo*. Paris, E´d. d'Organisation.

WADE, R. and F. VENEROSO (1998). 'The Asian Crisis: The High Debt Model versus the Wall Street-Treasury-IMF Complex'. New Left Review, 228, pp. 3-23.

WEIR, L., P. O'MALLEY and S. CLIFFORD (1997). 'Governmentality, criticism, politics'. Economy and Society, 26(4), pp. 501-217.

WHITLEY, R. (2005). 'How national are business systems? The role of states and complementary institutions in standardizing systems of coordination and control at the national level'. In Morgan, G., R. Whitley and E. Moen. *Changing capitalisms? Internationalisation, institutional change and systems of economic organization*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 190-231.

WILLIAMSON, J. (2000). 'What Should The World Bank Think About The Washington Consensus?'. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 15(2), pp. 251-264.

Z̆IZEK, S. (2014). *Trouble In Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism* [eBook]. London, Allen Lane.

Figures