

Empire and Democracy

Methodological problems of “Multitude”

a) On war: Clausewitz and Foucault

b) On Multitude: Empire vs. Multitude

c) On Democracy: Governance vs. Love

SEMIOSIS

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Multitude: “The separation of war from politics

was a fundamental goal of modern political thought and practice (...). Carl von Clausewitz's famous claim that *war is the continuation of politics by other means*, for example, might suggest that politics and war are inseparable, but really, in the context of Clausewitz's work, this notion is based, first of all, on the idea that war and politics are in principle separate and different.” (Negri/Hardt, Multitude, p.6)

[Clausewitz: “Therefore, once more: war is an instrument of policy; it must necessarily bear its character, it must measure with its scale: the conduct of war, in its great features, is therefore policy itself, which takes up the sword in place of the pen, but does not on that account cease to think according to its own laws.”/”Also noch einmal: der Krieg ist ein Instrument der Politik; er muß notwendig ihren Charakter tragen, er muß mit ihrem Maße messen; die Führung des Krieges in seinen Hauptumrissen ist daher die Politik selbst, welche die Feder mit dem Degen vertauscht, aber darum nicht aufgehört hat, nach ihren eigenen Gesetzen zu

Clausewitz

Multitude: “War in Clausewitz's view is an instrument in the state's arsenal for use in the realm of international politics. It is thus completely external to the political struggles and conflicts that exist within society.” (Multitude, p.6)

Clausewitz: “One and the same political object may produce totally different effects upon different people, or even upon the same people at different times; we can, therefore, only admit the political object as the measure, by considering it in its effects upon those masses which it is to move, and consequently the nature of those masses also comes into consideration. It is easy to see that thus the result may be very different according as these masses are animated with a spirit which will infuse vigour into the action or otherwise. It is quite possible for such a state of feeling to exist between two states that a very trifling political motive for war may produce an effect quite disproportionate, in fact, a perfect explosion.”

(Clausewitz, Vom Kriege, 1st book, chapter 1.11)

Clausewitz has inverted a historico-political discourse

[”Ein und derselbe politische Zweck kann bei verschiedenen Völkern, oder selbst bei ein und demselben Volk, zu verschiedenen Zeiten ganz verschiedene Wirkungen hervorbringen. Wir können also den politischen Zweck nur so als das Maß gelten lassen, indem wir uns ihn in Einwirkungen auf die Massen denken, die er bewegen soll, so daß also die Natur dieser Massen in Betrachtung kommt. Daß dadurch das Resultat ein ganz anderes werden kann, je nachdem sich in den Massen Verstärkungs- oder Schwächungsprinzipie für die Handlung finden, ist leicht einzusehen. Es können in zwei Völkern und Staaten sich solche Spannungen, eine solche Summe feindseliger Elemente finden, daß ein an sich sehr geringes politisches Motiv des Krieges eine weit über seine Natur hinausgehende Wirkung, eine wahre Explosion hervorbringen kann.”]

Multitude: “Michael Foucault goes so far as to say that the socially pacifying function of political power involves constant reinscribing this fundamental relationship of force in a sort of silent war (...). War, in other word, becomes [!!] the general matrix for all relations of power and techniques of domination, whether or not bloodshed is involved. War has become a *regime of biopower*, that is, a form

Foucault

Foucault: “In short, a society pervaded by warlike relations was slowly replaced by a state equipped with military institutions. [!!]

Now, this transformation had scarcely been completed when there appeared a certain type of discourse on the relations of society and war. A historico-political discourse (...) makes war the permanent basis of all the institutions of power.

This discourse appeared shortly after the end of the wars of religion and at the beginning of the great English political struggles of the seventeenth century. [...]

Beneath the omissions, illusions, and lies that make us believe in the necessities of nature or the functional requirements of order, we are bound to re encounter war: it is the cipher of peace. It continuously divides the entire social body; it places each of us in one camp or the other. “ (Foucault, Society must be defended, in:

Rabinow-Reader, p.61)

b) Multitude “Ecclesia est multitudo fidelium” (W. Occam)

- Modern Sovereignty: figure of one transcendent power plus capitalism (market-economy)
- Sovereignty machine in order to transform multitude in totality
- From medieval sovereignty (hierarchy) to modern sovereignty (discipline) to a type of sovereignty that produces the society and its individuals (bio-power)

[Comment: In this line of argumentation (from *Empire* p. 87ff.) the multitude is presented as a passive mass of people – other version, given also by Negri/Hardt: Multitude as the constitutional force, always-already present in sovereignty but not sovereign itself, see: *Multitude* p. 328)

Empire: “We identify three moments in the constitution of European modernity that articulate the initial figure of the modern concept of

Multitude

second, the reaction against these immanent forces and the crisis in the form of authority; and third the partial and temporary resolution of this crisis in the formation of the modern state as a locus of sovereignty that transcends and mediates the plane of immanent forces.” (Empire, 72)

combination of sovereignty plus capitalism. result:

“When the synthesis of sovereignty and capital is fully accomplished, and the transcendence of power is completely transformed into an transcendental exercise of authority, then sovereignty becomes a political machine that rules across the entire society. Through the workings of the sovereignty machine the multitude is in every moment transformed into an ordered totality.” (Empire, p. 87)

Multitude and sovereignty

But this form of sovereignty is nevertheless contested by the multitude, which is now introduced as a constituent force, that cannot become sovereign. But the earlier definition of sovereignty did not disappear from the text.

“We insisted earlier that the multitude is not a social body for precisely this reason: that the multitude cannot be reduced to a unity and does not submit to the rule of one. The multitude cannot be sovereign.” (p. 330)

“Sovereign power is not an autonomous substance and it is never absolute but rather consists of a relationship between rulers and ruled, between protection and obedience, between rights and obligation. (...) Sovereignty is thus, necessarily, a dual system of power.” (Multitude, p. 332)

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European Governance



Council and Parliament should limit their involvement in "primary" European legislation to the definition of "essential elements ..., leaving the executive" [i.e., the Commission] "to fill in the technical detail via implementing 'secondary' rules" (p. 20) without being bothered by national representatives in management or regulatory "Comitology" procedures (p. 31).

The Commission on its part would then promote "openness" and transparency by providing more (online) information about all stages of European decision processes; it would promote "participation" by extending its efforts to involve and consult subnational and local

governments, "civil society" and "network-led initiatives"

Multitude: Democracy and love

“The conditions are emerging today that give the multitude the capacity of democratic decision-making and that thus make sovereignty unnecessary.”
(Multitude p.354)

“The multiplicity of the multitude is not just a matter of being different but also of becoming different. Become different than you are! These singularities, act in common and thus form a new race, that is, a politically coordinated subjectivity that the multitude produces. The primary decision made by the multitude is really the decision to create a new race or, rather, a new humanity. When love is conceived politically, then, this creation of a new humanity is the ultimate act of love.” (Multitude, p. 356)

Changes in the political system

forms of liberal-democratic representation (charismatic leadership)	are replaced by	forms of populist representation (campaigning,
political society	is replaced by	the political becomes the
bourgeoisie public sphere	private is replaced by	entertainment/info-tainment
traditional (left/right) party system with institutional arrangements	is replaced by	an institutional arrangement dominated by corruption,
	sensationalism and uniform ideologies	

The political system has become authoritarian (leadership), elitisticly (political class) and exclusively (few chances for participation, politics as profession)). Re-integration of the excluded via Governance-procedures (consultation, discussion, evoking civil society).

Epochenbruch 1

FORDISM

- Fordistic FABRIK, Taylorism, Fließband, scientific design of labour, work-discipline and class-subjectivation

interrelated with/embedded in a social and political setting

- disciplinary society
- Male worker whose income suffices to cover life-costs;

POST-FORDISM

- Network enterprises as a prominent model, „fabbrica diffusa“, bio- and IT-technologies

interrelated with/embedded in a social and political setting

- control society
- Self-employed as an unisex-model; pluralisation of female

Epochenbruch 2

- Welfare-state secures the lohnarbeitsverhältnis centred around the image of male worker
- Nation-state as Überformung of business regulation in the metropolises
- International setting: bi-polar world system, cold war, de-colonisation of the third world
- Minimalisation of welfare state that now only guarantees a minimum of social security
- Trans-national enterprises as drivers of global business regulation
- Uni-polar world system with US-hegemony; Empire, Spaltung of the southern hemisphere in Least developed Countries, semi-peripheral and Emergent Countries
- Productivism exploits fossil
- Eco-capitalism (saving energy,