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**ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL RATIONALITIES:
USES AND ABUSES OF THE POLITICAL
EXCEPTIONALITY IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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Introduction. This article discusses some anthropological and sociological slight reflections about the uses and the abuses of the political exceptionality in the Covid-19 pandemic. The relevance is connected with questions about the "New Norm", permeated with the daily destructiveness of antisocial metabolic practices of an even more predatory capitalism, whose social control cannot regulate violent neoliberal extraction in a mode of accumulation.

Aim and tasks. The purpose of the article is to study the gradual resumption of interrupted social activities as a policy measure to combat the New Coronavirus Pandemic is placed from the perspective of its economic and ecologic rationalities as well as from the perspective of the new moral, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral demands directed to the common social actor and agent of big and small cities.

Results. The article substantiates the context of the so-called "new norm", permeated by the daily destructiveness of antisocial metabolic practices of even more predatory capitalism in a violent neoliberal form. Therefore, due to this discrepancy between legality and legitimacy, the level of authoritarianism and further growth of inequality and indifference among people increases. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a mismatch between legality and legitimacy, as well as the legitimization of the interests of individual actors in the market as opposed to the adoption of legislation and for pro-capital interests. The principles of legitimacy were limited by bureaucratic rationality and the genocidal legalism of neoliberal politics.

Conclusions. The pandemic has disrupted economies, has mainly punished the poorest and most underserved and has destabilized governments of various ideological nuances. Participants at all levels of the economy will suffer the most severe and immediate consequences of all losses. This is the controversial logic of capital and one of its main contradictions is revealed.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, economic rationalities, ecological rationalities.

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**ЕКОНОМІЧНА І ЕКОЛОГІЧНА РАЦІОНАЛЬНІСТЬ:
ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ТА ЗЛОВЖИВАННЯ
ПОЛІТИЧНОЮ ВИНЯТКОВІСТЮ В УМОВАХ
ПАНДЕМІЇ COVID-19**

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Вступ. У статті розглядаються деякі антропологічні та соціологічні невеликі роздуми про використання та зловживання політичною винятковістю в умовах пандемії Covid-19. Актуальність пов'язана з питаннями про "нову норму", пронизану щоденною деструктивністю асоціальних метаболічних практик ще більш хижацького капіталізму, соціальний контроль якого не може регулювати насильницьку неоліберальну екстракцію в режимі накопичення.

Мета і завдання. Метою статті є вивчення поступового відновлення перерваної соціальної діяльності, як політичний захід боротьби з пандемією нового коронавірусу ставиться з точки зору її економічної та екологічної раціональності, а також з точки зору нової моральної, емоційної, пізнавальної та поведінкові вимоги, спрямовані на спільного соціального суб'єкта та агента великих та малих міст.

Результати. В статті обґрунтовано контекст так званої "нової норми", пронизаної повсякденною деструктивністю асоціальних метаболічних практик ще більш хижацького капіталізму в насильницькій неоліберальній формі. Тому, зважаючи на цю невідповідність законності та легітимності, підвищується рівень авторитаризму та подальшого зростання нерівності та байдужості серед людей. В умовах пандемії Covid-19 виникає невідповідність законності та легітимності, а також легітимізацією інтересів окремих суб'єктів на ринку в противагу прийняттям законодавчим нормам та заради прокапітальних інтересів. Засади легітимності були обмежені бюрократичною раціональністю та геноцидним легалізмом неоліберальної політики.

Висновки. Пандемія підірвала економіку, в основному покарала найбільш вразливі та найменш забезпечені, а також дестабілізувала уряду через різні ідеологічні погляди та позиції. Учасники на всіх рівнях економіки понесуть найважчі і негайні наслідки цих втрат. Це суперечлива логіка капіталу, і виявляється одне з її головних протиріч.

Ключові слова: Covid-19, економічна раціональність, екологічна раціональність.

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Introduction. The article offers some anthropological and sociological slight reflections about this moment of gradual economic reopening and resumption of interrupted social activities as a policy measure to combat the New Coronavirus Pandemic. We pose, then, the central questions of the elaborated argument: how to understand this New Normal from the perspective of the new moral, emotional, cognitive and behavioral demands directed to the common social actor and agent of big and small cities? And how to avoid the torrent of misinformation and façade games that invaded public and media space, disrupting responsive political deliberation and imposing moral panic in form of the failure of serious and rational communicative discourse on the generalized social crisis, - and of impoverishment and miserability intensification of the of the working class, - of which the pandemic crisis of the New Coronavirus (Covid-19) is a significant cut?

These questions occupied the space for reflection about the 'New Normal' permeated by the daily destructiveness of antisocial metabolic practices of an even more predatory Capitalism, whose social controls fail to regulate violent neoliberal extraction in an accumulation regime and, with that, perpetuate industrial genocide.

Aim and tasks. The purpose of the article is to study the gradual resumption of interrupted social activities as a policy measure to combat the New Coronavirus Pandemic is placed from the perspective of its economic and ecologic rationalities as well as from the perspective of the new moral, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral demands directed to the common social actor and agent of big and small cities.

Literature review. The emergence of a social problem in the context of the hegemonic agenda of the social sciences depends directly on the faculty that it has to compromise the normal maintenance of the social relations, thus becoming what Robert Castel called an effective social issue (Castel, 1998). If this were not the case, any recent social problem would gain prominence and global significance. For Castel (1998), a social issue is characterized by a structural concern about the ability to maintain the cohesion of a society.

The author is thinking of supernumerary groups, unemployable, disenfranchised, devalued, disqualified, superfluous, deterritorialized or, inviting Guy Standing (2014), the countless precariats that expand daily by global capitalism. With our current Covid-19 Pandemic, these groups tend to become even more invisible and disposable and, on top of that, will be a much greater threat to the breakdown of this supposed cohesive existence (which, literally, is only cohesive for the wealthiest). As Antunes (2020) points out, Covid-19 only in its appearance is polyclassist. There is, therefore, “[...] a convenient myth that infectious diseases do not recognize class or other social barriers and limits” (Harvey, 2020). The pandemic capital, in its structure, ultimately affects the working class and the poorest and most unassisted sectors in a more disastrous way. Davis (2020) has the same understanding: the pandemic deepened social inequalities and economic and political asymmetries between rich and poor. Thus, for Antunes (2020), we are witnessing in this pandemic the growth of impoverishment and miserability in the entire working class.

Therefore, the antisocial metabolism of capital is marked by normality as destructiveness (Antunes, 2020). The destructiveness as a trivialization of life and naturalization of death, - whether in the form of industrial genocide as a way of relating to nature or even in the form of precarious work in a regime of kidnapping subjectivity as a way of human interaction, - implies moral horizons of denial solidarity and belonging, as well as emotional configurations based on generalized feelings of social suffering, such as failure, resentment and melancholy. In this sense, certainly one of the greatest deceptions present in some analyzes of the pandemic phenomenon lies in projecting our latent hopes in the future.

The New Coronavirus Pandemic brought, in a few months, severe changes in economic structures and in our daily relationships. As Harvey (2020) points out, today we have the experience of emptying the practices of capitalist consumerism. Nevertheless, after these first months of isolation and social detachment, and yielding to the structural pressure of markets and genocidal policy, we are returning to what has been called the New Normal.

Normality is understood here as a statistical average of tacitly accepted public behaviors, in a Durkheimian sense (Durkheim, 1995 and 1996), and as expectations of expectations about the legitimate means and ends of social action, in the understanding of Robert Merton (1936). Discussing the normality of an emotional culture (Barbosa, 2019) in a situation of moral reassembly also implies, in effect, seeking to understand the fields of possibilities that open up for the organization of individual and collective projects (Velho, 1987).

In this sense, the definition of the situation as New Normal refers primarily to what was once common, but which was lost, and to what crystallized during the pandemic outbreak (Thomas, 1928). Regarding what seems to have been lost, we can emphasize:

– The partial loss of confidence in public institutions and in the expert and counterfactual thinking systems which are typical of reflexive modernity (Giddens, 2013) - such as the Rule of Law, the Market, the Media, and, mainly, the Education and the Science, - and that were severely attacked by discrepant speeches and by self-excluding narratives. More than serious indications on how to individually adjust the social and cultural navigation of individual actors and social agents, families and companies framed and constrained by the pandemic, these institutions have moved away in evasions and occupations with themselves or they have started to attack systemic rationality that were perceived as adverse to them, such as the exemplary onslaught of moral disfigurement by groups of Politics and the Market, to the imperatives of scientificity of Science and of legality of Law in the assessment of the general context of social crisis;

– The partial loss of the sacredness of the home, of the private space, of the World of Life (Lebenswelt) with its logic of communicative, affective action and recognition among equals can also be verified. The home is increasingly invaded by the logic of info-precarious work in the Service Sector, the Home-Office, the Business Office, the improvised Classroom of the School and the Faculty, so that these logics resonates the hierarchies, the duties, the obligations and the deadlines of the Functional

Social Systems of Politic and Economic, generating stress, tiredness and frustration for family members.

Regarding what seems to have crystallized during this time of quarantine, social isolation, lockdown, etc., we can emphasize:

– The trivialization of life, expressed in the pseudo-dilemma between Economy and Health, daily voiced by the Market and the Media and that prevents, for example, the collective experience of mourning, while emphasizing the economic value of lost lives, lives in convalescence and inactive lives. This trivialization of life is also declined in the political strategies of segmenting the population into economically interesting plots and in economically disposable plots;

– The trivialization of the death and of the social suffering of the victims of Covid-19, expressed in the widespread irony and sarcasm regarding the seriousness and severity of a health crisis context; in the impossibility of mourning for dead family members, often simply discarded as polluting waste; and the uncertainties about the forms of prophylaxis and health care in case of illness, resulting in a definition of the situation that depreciates and trivializes death, no longer as the culmination of an individual trajectory, but as a mere nihilistic extinction of a biography that is statistically reduced to only another one more of the thousands of deaths by Covid-19;

– The widespread moral and emotional stance of civilizational failure, expressed in the political and economic inability to manage the health crisis, as attested by the millions of infected and thousands of deaths; in the media inability to manage communication in extreme situations, perceived in the noise between Media, Health, Science, Politics and Market; and in the dilemmas or pseudo-dilemmas that have been established in the vacuum of these communicational noises and asymmetries, such as, for example, the clash between ECONomic and ECOlogic rationalities, between the uses and abuses of the political exceptionality for the practice of Exception in Politics (authoritarian and opportunistic), and the construction of conspiratorial and accusatory narratives (the Chinese virus, the new Cold War, the biological warfare);

– The cognitive and behavioral posture of tiredness in the face of improvised, bureaucratic and even perverse demands of mere productive performance, as observed in the daily lives of millions of students, teachers and other professionals enclosed in their Home Offices;

– And, finally, it should be emphasized the crystallization of an economic situation of greater income inequality due to the effects of scorched earth from the New Coronavirus Pandemic, which potentiated already underway processes of precariousness and info-proletarianization of work.

Having made these slight considerations about what was lost and what was consolidated, albeit circumstantially, in the pandemic context, we can understand the New Normal as a socio-cultural configuration strongly guided by moral and emotional attitudes of distrust in relation to the expert and counterfactual social systems of thought; as a widespread feeling of civilizational failure and tiredness and moral bankruptcy in the face of enormous uncertainties, voluntarisms and improvisations in the daily dealings with the normality and trivialization of the pandemic.

The generalization of this scenario of civilizational crisis became important, as well as the uses and abuses of this scenario of crisis of western civilization for the common exercise of playfulness, of the elaboration of fake news and image making (Arendt, 2016) and of moral disfigurement which breaks with the attitudes of communicative action and sows the corrosive notions of failure and ridicule. As Žižek points out, “[...] the current spread of the coronavirus epidemic has, in turn, unleashed vast epidemics of ideological viruses that have lain dormant in our societies: false news, paranoid conspiracy theories, outbreaks of racism, etc.” (Žižek, 2020, p. 43).

These notions which, in the public space, - in face of an enigmatic omnipresent threat of impurity, pollution and contagion only attested by specific language of expertise and expertise, - obliterate the meanings of Politics and deeply irritate even the dullest counterfactual thinking inherent in a society of risks in a reflective modernity format. The Brazilian political-institutional experience, - the focus of this New Normal, - no matter how much it is built in parallel with authoritarian advances in

neighboring countries, ended up taking on the picturesque color of a social figuration engendered, on the one hand, by an authoritarian bureaucratic, police and personal, State, which expresses an elitist logic of mass regulation; and, on the other hand, by a population that is politically inexperienced in the uses of bureaucracy, of the State and of the contesting violence.

This population has, in effect, become a master at declining their political aspirations in terms of irreverent, ironic, mocking, carnivalized criticism; and, for his own self-mirrored feeling of failure and ridicule, politically impotent criticism; even though it is a form of culturally spectacular humor. The New Normal, in effect, is to take in the irresponsible way the risks (DaMatta, 1997), the dangers and the losses caused by the New Coronavirus Pandemic, naturalizing them and, with this, perpetrating a certain daily exercise of trivializing death.

Results. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (2015) brings us, from his notion of hypertrophy of law, a valuable reflection to think about the pandemic of Covid-19 and about the recursive contemporary political barbarism. Together with Agamben, we agree that there is, especially today in contemporary complex societies, a mismatch between legality and legitimacy that needs to be addressed, both from the theoretical point of view and from the perspective of action. In this way, for the author, it cannot be believed that we can face the societal crisis through the action (although necessary) of the judiciary, since a legitimacy crisis could not be solved only in terms of law, in the same way that a legality crisis would not be solved only through legitimacy.

The *hypertrophy of law* understood by Agamben as the “pretension to legislate over everything”, reveals itself through an excess of formal legality and, with it, the loss of all substantial legitimacy emerges. Therefore, the modern attempt to make legality and legitimacy coincide, seeking to ensure the legitimacy of a power through law, becomes totally insufficient. It is necessary, therefore, that legitimacy and legality are acting in the institutions, but without ever pretending that they coincide.

What Agamben brings us is that legality and legitimacy must act without the risk of overlapping one another. The excess of legitimacy would bring with it the imminent possibility of emergence of totalitarianism – since the terror would be legitimate under the design of the personalist will – while the excess of legality would bring with it the procedural and bureaucratic vacuum of modern democracies. In both cases, there is room for abuse of power and for maintenance of groups in political power. Regarding this emptiness made possible by legalism obtained through the excess of legality, the *hypertrophy of law* ends up opening space for the merely bureaucratic use of the law, implying that legitimate demands of societies are minimized in the face of the cold and impersonality of rules foreign to social ends.

Therefore, in view of this mismatch between legality and legitimacy, the condition of reified consciousness about individuals that, already immersed in contexts of authoritarianism and emptying the collective dimension of public space, ends up naturalizing inequality and indifference among human beings. Thinking of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the abyssal mismatch between legality and legitimacy ended up legitimizing the interests of a supreme market deity, to the detriment of life, and legislating not for the sake of life, but for pro-capital interests. The legitimacy of human life has been stifled by the bureaucratic rationality and by the genocidal legalism of neoliberal politics.

Despite the theoretical distance between Agamben and Honneth (2018), they have an understanding - to some extent - in agreement. For Honneth, the reification means that “[...] we no longer perceive in other people the properties that in fact make them exemplary of the human species... treating someone as a “thing” means taking it as “something”, depriving it of all human properties and capabilities” (Honneth, 2018, p. 197). We understand, then, that the process of crisis of

legitimacy pointed out by Agamben, at the hand of the *hypertrophy of law*, which seeks to “legalize” everything, ends up reducing life to a merely legal, normative, quantifiable dimension, etc. If the individual no longer recognizes humanity in the other, it is a profound step towards establishing an even greater gap between legality and legitimacy.

Honneth (2018) will say about that “[...] reification denotes rather an unlikely social case in which one subject not only violates the existing norms of recognition, but perceives and treats the other no longer as a neighbor” (Honneth, 2018). In reification, that elementary recognition is canceled, which in general ensures that we experience each human being existentially as the other of ourselves. So Honneth: “In the absence of this prior recognition, if we are no longer existentially involved with the other, then we suddenly treat him just as an inanimate object, a mere thing” (Honneth, 2018, p. 205-206).

Honneth, from the concept of reification, reveals theoretical elements of how it was possible – and how it is still today – the production of what he called industrial genocide, among them, the Nazism. It is, therefore, above all through the production of individuals capable of recognizing no humanity in the neighbor that the policy of extermination is created – so be it the Nazi industrial genocide or the Stalinist psychotic delusion, or even the naturalized acceptance of the thousands of annual deaths from hunger, delinquency, catastrophes, terrorism or epidemics (Covid-19 has been a strong example).

Conclusions. The pandemic has disrupted economies, has mainly punished the poorest and most underserved and has destabilized governments of various ideological nuances. Participants at all levels of the economy will suffer the most severe and immediate consequences of all losses. This is the perverse logic of capital and one of its main contradictions is revealed.

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