

Peace through Government: Delineating the Post-Conflict State-Building Dispositif

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Abstract: Notoriously, state-building is a key enterprise in regard of addressing the international conflicts throughout the globe. The consolidation of peace associated to it is intimately connected with the institutionalization of liberal ideas in structuring realms such as the political, the economical and the social spheres. Departing from Foucauldian concepts such as *dispositif*, government, discipline and biopolitics, this paper aims to critically analyze the post-conflict state-building practice. In a first moment, the paper delineates how peace was operationalized during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. In a second moment, it will present the Foucauldian conceptual tools that enables the (re)problematization of the state-building practice as a post-conflict normalizing *dispositif*, rather than merely a conflict-resolution tool.

Keywords: Peacebuilding – State-building – Michel Foucault – Normalization

INTRODUCTION

There is no absurd in saying that it is already common-sense that peacekeeping, peacebuilding and state-building constitute the very core of the international political policies in regard of peace in our time. Nevertheless, despite all these great efforts and the fact that “build[ing a] sustainable peace is a major challenge facing the international community” in our time (UNSC, 2008: 3), the reflection about such important and crucial theme, such as peace, still remains oddly marginal inside the discipline of International Relations (IR) (Richmond, 2008a, b).

Certainly, there is an impressive number of studies regarding peacebuilding, peacekeeping or state-building. However, their problematizations are often shallow and most of them are underpinning by a ‘problem-solving’² understanding of the world and, consequently, in regard of the construction of international peace. Hence, they are often “under-theorized” (Bellamy, 2004: 1), frequently “idiosyncratic and atheoretical” (Bures, 2007: 1), engaging in enclosed discussions usually distant, or having no relationship at all, with IR (Bellamy, 2004: 2) or Political Science theories as a whole, and generally having their inquiring narrowly limited by their policy relevance (Paris, 2000: 1; 7). It is precisely the critical analysis

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² For more in regard of the characteristics of problem-solving and critical reflections, see (Cox, 1981).

that evinces that this kind of reflection and epistemology regarding the international political policies related to peace are not neutral or impartial. Quite the contrary, «[they] attempt to create and recreate a particular type of international order, (...) [where] the type of order sustained is a distinctly liberal one» (Bellamy e Williams, 2004: 8).

In this context, this paper aims, to discuss the UN model regarding the transformation of the international violent conflicts making use of the reflections and the conceptual instruments developed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault. Departing from a Foucauldian standpoint, it is possible to understand the construction of peace in our time as a process of international *normalization* of 'post-conflict' states and their populations. This normalization is operated essentially through the state-building practice. It occurs through the *government* of the 'post-conflict' states, through their discipline, and of their populations, through the biopower exercised over their lives. In order to elucidate such argument, the paper will, in a first moment, delineate how peace was operationalized during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. In a second moment, it will present the Foucauldian conceptual tools that enables the (re)problematization of the state-building practice as a post-conflict normalizing *dispositif*, rather than merely a conflict-resolution tool.

PEACE IN THE POST-COLD WAR SCENARIO

For a long time, much of the reflection about peacekeeping was limited to diplomats and practitioners in the field (Fetherston, 2000: 191). Peacekeeping was initially reflected as mere instrument of «conflict management, conflict containment or conflict suppression, dealing within symptoms and not concerned with fundamental resolution» (Ramsbotham e Woodhouse, 2000: 5). Not by coincidence, right after the World War II, and during the whole period of the Cold War, the main UN activity in violent-conflict scenarios was peacekeeping, which usually meant the deployment of a small military force aiming just to monitor the ceasefire, or patrol, a neutral territory between former combatants³ (Paris e Sisk, 2009b: 4).

It was only with the end of the Cold War that this situation changed. Firstly, with the end of the Cold War not only several issues gained more relevance in the international scene, but also they were rationalized differently. This was the case of the intra-state violent conflicts. Although they represent most of the violent conflicts in the post-World-War-II period (Harbom e Wallensteen, 2010: 503), they were frequently framed within a Cold War mentality which usually disregarded the domestic structural causes of these conflicts. Secondly, with the end of East-West tensions, both superpowers were not willing to maintain high levels of military expenditure, or economic assistance to allies perceived as non-strategic. This allowed other international actors, such as the UN and its agencies, to become

³ For main reasons, see (Paris e Sisk, 2009b: 4).

much more active in the processes of ending and transforming violent conflicts throughout the globe. These two reasons led to a high 'demand' of UN peace operations⁴ at the international scene. Indeed, the number of peace operations deployed in the decade from 1989 to 1999 was more than the double of the ones deployed in the previous four decades together (Paris, 2004: 16-17). Thirdly, without the previous ideological tension, and the adding triumphant spirit of the West (perhaps most iconic in Fukuyama's (1992) *End of History*), there was little debate about how the domestic design of the states should look like. Indeed, Fukuyama was bluntly clear proclaiming the «end point in mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human governance» (1989: 4). It was more than clear that now the states should all resemble liberal democracies.

Obviously, the reflection about peace in the international sphere was not immune to this rationale. When more attention was given to the domestic structure of the conflicts, more fundamental questions of these conflicts started to be the main concern: its root causes. At this point, the reflection of the Peace Studies,⁵ discipline which advocates the exercise of other activities beyond the simple cessation of violent hostilities between states in order to build peace, was recovered, incorporating its concern with the overcome of the economic, political and social structures that prevent the satisfaction of the basic needs of the individuals in conflict. The main concern became the resolution of the conflicts rather than their mere management (Bures, 2007: 9-10). It is at this point that peacebuilding enters the UN's vocabulary.

Whereas, on the one hand, the transformation of the internal structures of the conflicts became more prominent, it was also clear, on the other hand, the path that should be followed and how the domestic structures should resemble. In an international environment distinctly marked by the liberal euphoria, it was barely discussible that the domestic structures of the states should be modified so these could become liberal democracies and consequently more pacific. The rationale was underpinned essentially by the reflections of "Kant, Schumpeter, and many other contemporary authors, [that] have argued that liberalism has a pacifying effect through liberal, democratic principles which are the basis for state institutions, and through its adherence to free trade and capitalism"⁶ (Richmond, 2008a: 89-90). This rationale was propelled to the international policies directed to peace and was materialized in the *Agenda for Peace* (1992), where the UN delineated its instruments directed to the construction of international peace, and consequently became a pivotal document regarding the international peace in the post-Cold-War world. The UN involvement, with the pass of time, became concerned not only with the provision of security, but also with the

⁴ The term is herein understood, in line with the UN vocabulary, as «[f]ield operations deployed to prevent, manage, and/or resolve violent conflicts or reduce the risk of their recurrence» (UN, 2008: 98).

⁵ For more regarding the Peace Studies see, for instance, (Dunn, 1978; Jeong, 1999; Rogers e Ramsbotham, 1999; Jeong, 2000; Dunn, 2005; Pureza e Cravo, 2005; Wiberg, 2005).

⁶ For a critique of this argument, see for instance (Doyle, 2004).

democratization through election and the marketization of the economy, and specially with the functioning of public administration systems, creation of institutions, and strengthening of the state's capacity to provide services to its populations. It is at this point, where the focus is the creation of political institutions, the enhancement of the state capacity, and the functioning of the state-society relations, that state-building becomes a key activity regarding peacebuilding (Manning, 2003; Brahimi, 2007; Paris e Sisk, 2009a: Chapter 1).

POST-CONFLICT STATE-BUILDING

State-building has become a crucial activity and one of the most pressing issues regarding peace in contemporary international relations. In nowadays' international scenario, state-building is a pivotal instrument used to address issues regarding both the international security and development. Despite the apparent distance between both discourses⁷, it is their underlying rationale and the centrality of the question of 'fragility' that bind them together. Both discourses have as one of their primary concerns the 'fragility' of the states. This 'fragility', understood as «weak institutions and governance systems, and a fundamental lack of leadership, political will and/or capacity to deliver on key public goods, especially in terms of protecting the poor» (Ingram, 2010: 4), is at the very heart of the state-building debate. Indeed, the whole state-building agenda emerges as «a direct policy response to these conditions» (Ibidem: 5).

As a practice performed at the international scene in 'post-conflict' scenarios⁸, state-building might have more than one understanding. At its narrower perspective, state-building deals specifically with its immediate meaning; it focuses on the (re)construction of states through the strengthening and/or the (re)creation of its institutional apparatuses. In this understanding, 'post-conflict' state-building is a distinct phase of the reconstruction efforts which primary objective is the (re)construction of political institutions (Bickerton, 2007: 96). This phase would be a part of the peacebuilding activity and would seek to create effective and legitimate governmental institutions (Paris e Sisk, 2007: 1), which would be endowed with governance instruments and capable of providing physical and economic security to the citizens in question (Chesterman, 2004: 5). In this understanding, state-building is intimately connected with state capacity (Fukuyama, 2004) and its internal governance (Rotberg, 2004). In this view, state-building «refers to efforts to reconstruct, or in some cases to establish for the first time, effective and autonomous structures of governance in a state or territory where no such capacity exists or where it has been seriously eroded» (Caplan, 2005: 3). The definition of 'post-conflict' state-building as «the strengthening or construction of legitimate governmental institutions in countries that are emerging from conflicts» advanced by Paris and Sisk's (2009a: 14) best sums up this understanding.

⁷ Distance very much shortened by the elucidations, for instance, of Mark Duffield (2001, 2007).

⁸ For other contexts where 'state-building' might take place, see for example (Fritz e Menocal, 2007: 17).

In a wider sense, state-building is analyzed well beyond this primary institutional understanding. It is analyzed as an international engagement with the domestic governing mechanisms of other states and their respective societies. This understanding includes much more than the (re)construction and strengthening of state institutions, it also reflects upon the whole set of practices on which internationals focus on the management and regulation of state-society relations. Those practices might vary as international assistance to strengthening the regulatory capacity of the state, to conditionalities, debt relief, international loans, poverty reduction strategies, and many others (Chandler, 2006). This is a more comprehensive understanding of state-building and allows the problematization of its practices not only during reconstruction periods, but also in a different set of engagement among states and international organizations. In a 'post-conflict' peacebuilding setting, for instance, this would require the analyst to observe not only the 'post-conflict' state institutions that are being (re)constructed/strengthened, but also the whole set of practices that seek to shape and direct the relations between 'post-conflict' states and their populations.

Apparently, it is towards this understanding that the policy-oriented reflections are heading to. Observing some key policy papers of the OECD (2008, 2010), DFID (2009, 2010) and UNDP/WB (Ingram, 2010), it is clear that they are responding to the aforementioned criticisms of depolitization, technicality and legitimacy. It is seen that the understanding of 'state-building' has evolved considerably from the mere institution-building and capacity enhancement framework to a focus on the state-society relations (Rocha Menocal, 2009: 6). Nowadays, in the 'post-conflict' scenarios, the relations between the 'post-conflict' states and their populations are at the heart of the state-building efforts. While in the recent past those state-society relations were also targeted, but as a consequence of the institutional building/enhancement attempts, current state-building practices are precisely concerned with them. Now, state-building is «essentially concerned with **how** the state interacts with society» (Ingram, 2010: 6), and international state-builders are fundamentally concerned with «**how** the state performs and **how** it engages with society» (Ibidem: 7; all emphasis in the original). Indeed, state-building «entails concentrating on how power and authority are distributed and exercised, and this in turn necessitates thinking and working across all elements of the state and at the intersection between state and society» (Ibidem: 24). Nevertheless, this understanding still remains unsaid some elements that are important to clarify. Firstly, that the state-building practice has become even more invasive and profound. Secondly, that this *how* the state should perform, this *how* it should interact and engage with the society is internationally pre-given. Finally, that the interactions of the 'post-conflict' states and their populations are conducted by international state-builders towards this pre-given *how*. In fact, whole populations are conducted towards this pre-determined *how*; toward not only *how* state should relate to the society, but also *how* the society should act and also relate to the state.

In both senses, the state-building can be seen as a social (re)engineering based on the transposition of values and ideas of the western world to war-torn

societies. Either institutionally or through conditionalities, it can be said that the final objective is very much the same: the construction of liberal democracies. As already said, more often than not, the reflection about the construction of peace is centered on a 'problem-solving' understanding of the world. Nevertheless, this way of seeing things tends to miss much of the picture. It tends to portray the state-building activity as a neutral conflict-resolution instrument and neglects the power relations entrenched in such process.

It is precisely at this point that the reflection of Michel Foucault is of great help. Through a Foucauldian problematic, one is enabled to see that the state-building activity might be problematized as an instrument of promoting and maintaining a certain international order, a liberal one. It enables the visualization of deep power relations in what is portrayed as a neutral, even a beneficial, relationship between the state-builders and local actors. More than that, his reflection and conceptual tools enable the problematization of the state-building practice as a normalizing activity in the international scenario, rather than a mere conflict-resolution tool addressing the transformation of violent conflicts in war-torn societies throughout the globe.

FOUCAULDIAN ANALYTICAL TOOLS

This paper proposes that the 'post-conflict' state-building processes might be examined through a Foucauldian problematic arguing that the state-building practice in fact is a normalizing technology of 'post-conflict' states and their populations. This normalization is argued to operate through the government of 'post-conflict' states and their populations' lives at a global scale. The whole rhetoric, mechanisms and instruments of the state-building processes are portrayed as directed to the prevention and transformation of violent conflicts. Nevertheless, the state-building *dispositif*⁹ is a normalizing technology that ends up disciplining the 'post-conflict' states and biopolitically governing their populations. At the international level, this government operates through discipline, which works through instruments of knowing, assessing, monitoring, individualizing, ranking, rewarding and punishing individual 'post-conflict' states. These include standardized data collection, performance benchmarking, auditing techniques, access to credit lines, funding of projects, conditionalities, sanctions, and so on. At the national level, government operates through biopolitics, which functions through the administration and control of life-supporting processes of the mass population, such as health, education, sanitation, movement, life, death, jobs, food, and so on, in these 'post-conflict' states. As a normalizing technology, the state-building *dispositif* has a norm underpinning its activities which is the ultimate aim of its conducts. This norm is that the states should resemble liberal democracies.

⁹ Usually the word *dispositif* used by Foucault is translated as 'apparatus' to English. Nevertheless, in order to avoid translation discussions or misperceptions (Kelly, 2009: 174, footnote 12), this paper uses the original word 'dispositif'.

Usually, state-building is considered by problematizing each aspect of it or the performance of specific actors performing determined activities, and not the process as a whole. Consequently, what is usually visible is the observation of the constitution-building efforts, the processes of money lending by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), feeding by World Food Program (WFP), security sector reforms, housing construction by the HABITAT, electoral processes assistance, development activities by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the financing of reconstruction efforts by World Bank (WB) and so on, individually. It is seeking precisely to avoid this discrete and partial observation of the state-building processes that this paper uses the notion of *state-building dispositif*.

DISPOSITIF

Although not offering a complete definition, Foucault comes close to it while delineating what a dispositif is in an interview (Agamben, 2009: 2). He said:

What I'm trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions - in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements.

[...] I understand by the term 'apparatus' a sort of - shall we say - formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an *urgent need*. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function.

[...] I said that the apparatus is essentially of a *strategic* nature, which means assuming that it is a matter of a certain manipulation of relations of forces, either developing them in a particular direction, blocking them, stabilizing them, utilizing them, etc. [...] This is what the apparatus consists in: strategies of relations of forces supporting, and supported by, types of knowledge (Foucault, 1980 194-196).

With this in mind, to conceptualize the state-building as a dispositif brings a more comprehensive appreciation of the whole process than understanding it merely as a conflict-resolution tool. The elements of this state-building dispositif would be all the actors, theories, discourses, concepts, practices, instruments, institutions and so on, that are deployed to the shaping and conducting of 'post-conflict' states and their populations. This notion facilitates the understanding of distinct actions, experts, practices, procedures, concepts that may not be interrelated at all, and in fact could be very much conflicting, as part of one comprehensive and coherent whole.

OPERATING ACTORS AND CONCEPTS

Regarding the actors one might think of many agents that are part of this state-building dispositif. Those might be major organizations like the UN and its specialized agencies, the OSCE, the EU, the NATO, the OECD, other regional organizations, international financial institutions such as the IMF and WB, and national development agencies/departments like the USAID, AUSAID or the DFIF. Additionally, one might also think about the international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) that operate in 'post-conflict' scenarios, the consultants and experts hired for specific tasks, and also the local people and NGOs of the countries under state-building. Surely, all these actors operate different tasks, through diverse mechanisms and most often with distinct and, not rarely, conflicting objectives. Nevertheless, they all operate within this state-building dispositif.

In order to operate smoothly, this state-building dispositif must make use of a set of theories and concepts. Perhaps the first operating concept is the notion of 'failed state'. This concept is at the heart of the very existence and need of the state-building dispositif. As already mentioned, the state-building emerges in the international scene in order to address the question of 'fragility', and this notion is operationalized through the conceptualization of 'failed states'. The concept emerges when the orthodox thinking, observing the international scene, problematizes the 'fragility' and the 'lack of capacity' of some state structures, or the 'bad governance' of them (Doornbos, 2006: 2) as source of both insecurity and underdevelopment. These states are 'failed' because they «no longer perform the [basic] functions required for them to pass as states» (Zartman, 1995: 5). These functions range from the provision of welfare and security to the border patrol and the rule-of-law enforcement. The state capacity to provide these functions is, therefore, central to this notion (Hill, 2005: 145). According to the state-builders rationale, with these states unwilling (Gros, 1996), or even unable (Jackson, 2000), to perform such critical tasks, it is wide open the space for them to become «source of many of the world's most serious problems, from poverty to AIDS to drugs to terrorism» (Fukuyama, 2004 at pp. ix).

This 'failed state' notion is very much connected with another operating concept of this state-building dispositif which is the reinterpretation of the concept of sovereignty. The idea of sovereignty always was the very bedrock of international relations. Nevertheless, a problematization focused on the state (in)capacity could hardly be developed without a differentiation and (re)categorization of the concept of sovereignty. One might think, for instance, of *positive* and *negative* sovereignty (Jackson, 1990). The positive sovereignty is the possession of state characteristics *de facto* and *de jure* whereas the negative one is the absence of the *de facto* characteristics (Hill, 2005 146). In this rationale, it is precisely this "gap between *de jure* sovereignty and *de facto* sovereignty [that] is the key obstacle to ensuring global security and prosperity" (Ghani *et al.*, 2005: 4).

These two operating concepts work together constructing the *urgent need* which the state-building dispositif must address. Connecting these two concepts, on the one hand, the state-building dispositif, while designed to address 'fragility', becomes urgently needed in order to enhance international security and wellbeing of global populations. On the other hand, while being portrayed as closing the 'post-conflict' states' 'sovereignty gap', the state-building is not viewed as an external intervention. In fact, it is viewed as enhancing 'post-conflict' states capacity. Indeed, the state-building dispositif is presented as a beneficial relationship between the state-builders and state-built actors in the sense that the former are '*reinforcing*' the sovereignty and independence of the latter. The former are portrayed as intervening and enhancing the *de facto* capacities of the states while these still maintain their *de jure* sovereignty.

Another notion that is important to the operation of the state-building dispositif is 'good governance'. The idea of 'governance' frames the area of intervention. For the World Bank, governance means «the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development» (1992: 92). Despite the importance of the term 'governance', what is the key operative word on the notion is the adjective 'good'. Here, whereas the financial institutions emphasize specific macro-economic reforms, the political ones place more attention to democratic principles, human rights and rule of law (Wouters e Ryngaert, 2005: 69-77). The implicit idea of this 'good governance' notion is that the 'bad' and 'inappropriate' governance that must be corrected so they can become 'good'. This correction would come through economic, political and social reforms such as the reduction of trading barriers and tariffs, privatization of state-owned properties, deregulation and liberalization of the economy, marketization of public services, budgetary discipline, respect for human rights, NGO engagement, rule of law and so on (Wouters e Ryngaert, 2005: 73; Zanotti, 2005: 468). This is a key element of the 'normalization' process under which 'post-conflict' states and their populations performed by the state-building dispositif.

NORMALIZATION

Problematizing the state-building dispositif as a normalizing technology surely needs a delineation of what is meant by 'technology' and 'normalization'. The word 'technology' is herein used to capture the very essence of state-building processes. The pivotal element about technologies, in a Foucauldian sense, is that «they are technologies, not merely structures or discourses of power, though there are certainly discourses and structures involved». This means that «they are, like other technologies, a body of technical knowledge and practices, a raft of techniques, which once developed and understood can be applied to various situations». Additionally, they «are not socially or politically neutral but rather profoundly alter the way things operate in society» (Kelly, 2009: 43-44). Hence, the word 'technology' is used to place emphasis on the standardized character of the state-

building processes. Whereas the international conflicts have diverse characteristics, the answer to them usually passes precisely through the inverse – uniformity. The state-building became a standardized conflict-resolution mechanism applied indiscriminately throughout different ‘post-conflict’ scenarios across the world (Clapham, 1998), being even referenced as a «standard operation procedure» (Ramsbotham, 2000: 170).

Regarding normalization, from the start, this notion operates through an underpinning ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ condition. In the normalization process, one has «different curves of normality, and the operation of normalization consists in establishing an interplay between these different distributions of normality and [in] acting to bring the most unfavorable in line with the more favorable» (Foucault, [1978] 2007: 91). In a few words, the ‘abnormal’ ones must be intervened to become more like the ‘normal’ ones (Idem). Hence, in a normalization process, the ‘normal’ is the primary element and the norm which the others must follow is deduced from it. In the international sphere, it is clear who the ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ are. The ‘normal’ condition is associated with the Western-liberal-democratic states, while the ‘abnormal’ with the other states. This ‘normal’ condition rests on the notion, previously alluded, that the liberal and democratic principles and institutions bring a pacifying effect. The ‘norm’, according to which the states should resemble liberal democracies, is deduced from this notion.

It is precisely at this normalization process that the ‘failed state’ notion works perfectly. This is an *a contrario* concept, that is, it encompasses a subliminal, unspoken, dichotomy of what is a ‘successful’/‘normal’ state (Pureza et al., 2007: 3), which is the liberal-democratic one. The ‘failed states’ are thus portrayed as ‘abnormal’ states through analogies like «degenerative disease» (Zartman, 1995: 8), «serious mental or physical illness» (Helman e Rather, 1992: 12), or even «dead leaves that accumulate in a forest» (Krasner e Pascual, 2005: 155). Hence, to normalize these ‘abnormal’ states is to find instruments to implement this liberal-democracy ‘norm’ there. Therefore, the state-building dispositif emerges as a fit instrument to intervene in these states in order to normalize them and their populations, to make them resemble more like liberal democracies. Since this normalization process carried out by the state-building dispositif occurs through the government of the ‘post-conflict’ states, operated through discipline, and their populations’ lives, operated through biopolitics, these conceptual tools must also be better elucidated.

GOVERNMENT

Reading the word ‘government’ one of the very first things that might come to mind is, quite understandably, the state and the wide range of institutions it involves. Nevertheless, the Foucauldian understanding of government seeks exactly to develop an analytical framework that enables the reflection of the political power exercised precisely outside, above, permeating, across and beyond the state (Rose e Miller, 1992; Larner e Walters, 2004: 2). Briefly defining

government as the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Foucault, [1982] 2000: 341), Foucault enlarges its meaning to cover the scope adopted here, viz. «mechanisms and procedures destined to conduct men, to drive the conduct of men, to conduct the conduct of men»¹⁰ ([1980] 2009: 18). Understanding government as the ‘conduct of conduct’, Foucault notoriously plays with the double meaning of the word ‘conduct’ and consciously sees it as «one of the best aids for coming to terms with the specificity of power relations» (Ibid, [1982] 2000: 341). Whereas as a verb, ‘to conduct’, means to lead, to guide or to direct, as a noun, ‘conduct’ refers to the human actions and behaviors (Dean, 2010: 17). Connecting these two meanings, government as ‘conduct of conduct’ «entails any attempt to shape with some degree of deliberation aspects of our behaviour according to particular sets of norms and for a variety of ends» (Ibidem: 18).

Therefore, government in the Foucauldian sense is much more than the mere management of the state structures. Indeed, to govern, in this sense, means «to structure the possible field of action of others» (Foucault, [1982] 2000: 341). Hence, government becomes an activity that does not operate solely at the state level, but also turns out to be apparent in the every-day aspects and places of an ordinary life such as at schools, factories, hospitals, business enterprises, religious sites, families and so on. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that government works simultaneously and complementarily with other Foucauldian technologies of power such as discipline and biopolitics.

DISCIPLINE AND BIOPOLITICS

During the modern period Foucault observes the emergence of two technologies of power: ‘discipline’ and ‘biopower’. They are powers that are exercised through *correcting* and *enhancing life* respectively. A key understanding of those technologies of power visualized by Foucault is that they operate in different levels and scales, and through different instruments. This fact is what allows one technology to exist without the extinction of the other. Indeed, it allows that these technologies can function simultaneously.

Discipline is a technology of power that is essentially exercised on individuals and mainly concerned with the production of their behaviors. Therefore, it can be understood as a micro-political power (Kelly, 2009: 43). Discipline is a type of power that is very much connected to the notion, previously presented, of normalization. Indeed, the ultimate aim of discipline is to normalize. It is in essence a process that seeks to correct the behaviors of deviant individuals. The operative word here is certainly the adjective *deviant*. In this sense, the disciplinary mechanism visualizes what should be the *correct* behavior and mold the incorrect ones toward this model.

¹⁰ Translation by the author. In the original: “mecanismos e procedimentos destinados a conduzir os homens, a dirigir a conduta dos homens, a conduzir a conduta dos homens” (Foucault, [1980] 2009: 18).

Underpinning this disciplinary mechanism there are the processes of individualization and ranking. The individualization process is the one that makes sure that a mass of subjects can be treated individually. Nevertheless, through ranking, these individuals are always problematized in relation to other individuals. Hence, rank definition is a key element of the process (Zanotti, 2008: 552). In fact, «discipline is the ark of rank» (Foucault, [1975] 1995: 146); it is through ranking that discipline can hierarchize the 'good' and 'bad' or 'normal' and 'abnormal' individuals in relation to one another (Ibidem: 181). The closer the individual is from the adopted 'norm', the better ranked he/she is. Hence, those with low ranks must be intervened in order to resemble more like those better ranked. The ranking «has a double role: it marks the gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes, but it also punishes and rewards» (Idem). It is through the punishing and rewarding technique that 'abnormal' behaviors are molded and corrected, and the 'normal' ones invested and stimulated. Through this process, the individuals are «situated in a network of relations and defined by their position within it. [...] [R]anks reinforces discipline through mechanisms of reward/punishment such as promotion/demotion; [it] establishes systems of performance assessment and comparison linked to measurable criteria» (Zanotti, 2008: 552). Hence, discipline constantly «compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*» (Foucault, [1975] 1995: 183).

On the opposite pole of discipline, biopower operates on a macro-political level. It is exercised on the collectivity having the population as its target (Kelly, 2009: 43). It is a power concerned with men as a living-being (Foucault, [1976] 2003: 242); hence it is fundamentally exercised on the population's life. Therefore, rather than an «anatomo-politics of the human body» what is perceived is a «'biopolitics' of the human race» (Ibidem: 243). Biopolitics thus aims to «the management and regulation of the population, the species body and its demographic characteristics» (Smart, 2002: 99). It is a power that seeks the management and the administration of the processes of life at the level of the population.

Hence, biopolitics starts to problematize a whole set of phenomena that bind the population together, that makes it a whole. It problematizes all the «the mechanisms of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes» (Foucault, [1976] 1978: 139). Biopolitics is concerned thus with phenomena like birth, death, production, illness, fertility, health, life expectancy, housing, education and so on, and with all the conditions that might influence them (Idem; Duffield, 2007: 6). Hence, biopolitics acts in two directions: not only at the life-supporting processes *per se*, but also at their surrounding conditions, at the environment that influences those processes. Ultimately, biopolitics acts where the population's lives might be sustained or retarded (Dean, 2010: 119). Hence, the emergence of such power designates precisely «the moment at which the complex phenomena of human existence were submitted to the calculation and order of knowledge and power» (Smart, 2002: 99).

Whereas discipline had as its ultimate goal to correct the deviant individual, biopolitics targets the life-supporting processes in order to invest and foster life. Its

ultimate goal is to enhance life quality and its conditions. Hence, the objective is not to kill or correct the individual, but to intervene at the level of the generality of the life-supporting phenomena. To intervene in such a way, biopolitics makes use of instruments, techniques and institutions different from discipline's instruments. This happens through the implementation of a whole set of instruments and institutions that ensure the enhancement of vital processes of the population. Regarding the instruments, one might think of all the instruments directed to mass populations like «forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measures» (Foucault, [1976] 2003: 246) and «techniques of mass surveillance, such as the census, and of mass control, such as health campaigns» (Kelly, 2009: 43). Regarding the institutions, one might think, for instance, of health, education, welfare, employment, sanitation or feeding systems (Dean, 2010: 29).

Apart from those instruments and institutions, biopolitics makes also use of the notion of average. Through the establishment of averages, what biopolitics seeks is to preserve an equilibrium intervening on the deviations. It is with this in mind that one can think that «the mortality rate has to be modified or lowered; life expectancy has to be increased; [or] the birth rate has to be stimulated» (Foucault, [1976] 2003: 246). In doing so, biopolitics takes control of the vital processes of 'man-as-species' and as a result life can be fostered and consequently managed, so life ends up being regularized (Ibidem: 247) and normalized. Here, the norm also plays a key role, since it circulates between both discipline and biopolitics (Ibidem: 253). As Foucault properly remembers, «[t]he norm is something that can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regularize» (Idem).

As already mentioned, these technologies of power might operate simultaneous and complementarily. To clarify this, Foucault alludes to the image of a triangle composed by these technologies which has the population as its target ([1978] 2007: 143). As such, power can be exercised at the conduction of behaviors and conducts, of individuals and populations at once, ensuring the discipline and regulation of each and all of them at once (Rose, 1999: 23). In sum, it becomes a more complete and comprehensive process of normalization.

Extrapolating this line of thought to the international scenario, it is not unreasoned to visualize this normalizing mechanism in full activity, for instance, in the post-conflict reconstruction efforts. One might think, for instance, about all the adjustments and restructurings carried out on these states. In this sense, the state-building becomes, more than a mere conflict-resolution instrument, a very comprehensive normalizing dispositif which aims to intervene in the 'post-conflict' states seeking to normalize them, to make them to behave in accordance to an established 'norm'. Not only the state per se, but also their relationship with their own populations and how the populations itself should behave are intervened and normalized. Consequently, not only the 'post-conflict' states are disciplined through rewards and punishments instruments that aim to correct their 'deviant' behavior, and then make these states behave 'accordingly', but also their populations are conducted in such a way that their lives are regularized and

managed, that they also start to behave 'properly'. Such regulation occurs essentially through the biopolitical power exercised over all aspects that surround and maintain their lives.

The notions of 'failed states' and 'good governance', as already mentioned previously, have a key role in the process. The former not only makes that the state-building dispositif emerges as a proper solution to insecurities in the international scenario, but also it is a sort of negative parameter, essential in the ranking processes of the states. It is precisely while characterizing certain states as 'failed' that one is, subliminally and essentially, raking this state in comparison with other states. More than that, this raking process is done while intimately connecting the 'failure' of these states with the international insecurities and underdevelopments.

Such mechanism creates the necessity of reforming these states and correcting their behaviors so they stop being 'failed'. Moreover, these corrections and interventions are portrayed as a beneficial relationship due to the possibilities open by the reinterpretations of sovereignty. Consequently, numerous economic, political and social reforms are carried out, in light of the notion of 'good governance', aiming that these states stop being a threat to the international system. It is in this framework that should be perceived, for instance, all the structural adjustments imposed by the IMF, stimulating certain kinds of economic conducts, and blocking others, by the 'post-conflict' states through, for example, the concession (or denial) of funding and credits to these states. In essence, it is aimed that the economy in general behaves in a determinate form.

One might also think on the vast and profound reforms in the political sphere such as, for instance, the creation of whole juridical, legislative and executive systems, when not in fact exercising these powers¹¹, the constitution writing, the definition of electoral systems, the passing of laws and so on. On the social sphere, it is clear, for instance, the management of a variety of key areas of the lives of the populations in question, going from the movement on the territory, to the education, health, feeding, demographics, housing, jobs, to name a few. Under this framework, all these actions are essentially conductions of conducts which have the objective of stimulate, or not, certain kinds of behaviors, so the politics and the population in general behave accordingly. Intervening on both levels, the state and the population, the state-building dispositif places both in a complex power network which the objective is to conduct their conducts so they can become more similar to a liberal-democratic state and population.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper had the objective of initiate the discussion to argue for a problematization of the state-building process through the reflections and theoretical tools of Michel Foucault. Perhaps the main benefit of this endeavor is

¹¹ The case of Timor-Leste is emblematic in this sense since external actors, in this case the UN, had all the juridical, legislative and executive powers over the territory.

the major possibilities open by his reflections about the exercise of power. It enables, for instance, the exposition of power being operationalized in relationships, institutions and situations that could be, at a first sight, apparently neutral and impartial.

Departing from the theoretical tools herein presented, it is possible to start to problematize the state-building as a normalizing dispositif at global scale; as a process of government which occurs at the level of the 'post-conflict' states, through their discipline, and their populations through the biopolitical power exercised over their lives. Obviously, the next step following this initial problematization would be the effective exposition of the functioning of these tools while observing a concrete case. In this sense, some paths might be delineated. At the state level, the discipline would be perceived mapping out instruments of knowing, assessing, monitoring, individualizing, codifying, ranking, rewarding and punishing individual 'post-conflict' states. Those might be majorly elements like maps, standardized data collection/reporting, statistics benchmarks, performance indicators, auditing techniques, accesses to lines of credit, project funding, conditionalities, even sanctions. This entails elucidating aspects such as: through what mechanisms the UN engagement is monitored; how 'progress'/'regression' is assessed; what sort of projects are more likely to be financed/rejected, or initiatives to be encouraged/discredited. It aims at clarifying the kinds of conduct that the 'post-conflict' state is subject to rewards/ punishments, elucidating how, when, and through what instruments the incentives/corrections occur.

At the population's level, it could be delineated the activities carried out on the economic, political, social and security spheres. It could be mapped out, for example, the processes of writing constitution, the kind of laws formulated, and how the executive, judicial and legislative systems are constituted. It would involve also the elucidation of the actions fostering the 'post-conflict' populations' life, managing and controlling life-supporting processes of the mass population of the 'post-conflict' intervened state. Evincing biopolitics would entail elucidating the practices performed in areas such as births, health, sanitation, education, jobs, movement on the territory, feeding, demography, and so on. It would involve a mapping of instruments and processes that influence, shape and conduct the population's lives.

Instead of understanding all these distinct spheres of state-building activities as individual activities, it could be more clarifying to problematize all these practices as part of a state-building dispositif. In this way, it would be clearer that these activities often end up disciplining the 'post-conflict' state and biopolitically governing their populations. Rather than disparate and sometimes conflicting activities, they all aim to normalize the 'post-conflict' state and their populations. Ultimately, they are all part of a normalization process which aims to implement a non-written 'norm' in the international system, which is that the states should all resemble liberal democracies.

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