

LA GOBERNANZA DEL MIEDO. IDEOLOGÍA DE LA SEGURIDAD Y CRIMINALIZACIÓN DE LA POBREZA

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The book by Alicia García Ruiz *La gobernanza del miedo. Ideología de la seguridad y criminalización de la pobreza*, (“The Governance of Fear. Ideology of Security and the Criminalisation of Poverty”) is ramthrough by a fundamental idea: control and security are being transformed at both poles of the same continuum of social dynamics. Throughout the essay the author aims to trace the lines of continuity between the different realities emerging from beneath the discourses on security as a political argument and a social collective imagination. Yo begin with, the author analyses control and security through the privatisation of social goods, and then Alicia García addresses fear and contingency.

In the 1979 text, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Michel Foucault shows a new approach to the social. In this series of seminars Foucault elucidates the processes that served to consolidate the emergence of ‘the entrepreneurial man’: ‘*Homo economicus* is an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself. This is true to the extent that, in practice, the stake in all neoliberal analyses is the replacement every time of *homo economicus* as partner of exchange with a *homo economicus* as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings’ (Foucault, 2008, 226).

Foucault thus opens up a domain of analysis where he begins to establish the possible relations between the economic model and subjectivities from a biopolitical perspective. Alicia García inscribes her research into the genealogy of the governmentality of technologies of power that Foucault elaborated in order to explore the place of subjectivity within post-fordist modes of production. With the aim of discerning the effects and modes of subjectification that include and foster subjectivity, the author decodes the inherent rationalism of control systems and approaches the question from the perspective of the privatisation of the social.

The perspective on control and security adopted by the author makes it necessary to address the Foucauldian description of the transformation of the worker in terms of ‘human capital’: the notion that one must be responsible for one’s own education, growth, accumulation and improvement as capital. The workers are no longer a mere factor in production. They are, in the strict sense, a work force – capital-skill and a skills ma-

chine. In order to analyse the figure of the 'entrepreneur of oneself', Alicia García looks at what is external to work, abandoning an analysis of the structure of economic processes and focusing rather on the individual, on subjectivity and on the conditions of production of life.

Alicia García intends to interrogate this 'outside' primarily because the 'entrepreneurialisation' of life does not derive from the internal rational forms of the logic of production but from what the author and Foucault both call 'the government of men'. This is the novelty that Foucault introduced into the history of capitalism and which acquires particular relevance today.

The author's analysis of fear and insecurity is based on a new mode of governmentality in which people regulate and govern themselves – what for Foucault constitutes neoliberalism. The author pays particular attention to the Foucauldian concept of 'mobilisation', used by the French philosopher to summarise the commitment and activation of subjectivity by corporate management and social government techniques. From this new perspective, it is not that life is put to work but that life itself ceases to be objective data, becoming something subjective instead. To live is to work on one's life – to live is to manage one's life.

The second part of the essay, concerning fear and contingency, is inscribed within what Max Weber called the 'iron cage', referring to the bureaucratic structures that rationalise time and space. In contemporary capitalist societies, the 'iron jail' opens and operates to form new apparatuses of control. A culture of fear is configured – a state of constant risk.

The great theorist of the 'risk society' from the perspective of critical sociology, is the German sociologist Ulrich Beck, who maintains that we live in a society where risk is no longer generated by an uncontrollable natural environment or a lack of particular technologies and instruments. Rather, risk is produced by the very artificial structures that were put in place to control the environment: the technological and productive technologies, scientific laboratories etc. Beck distinguishes a primary form of modernity – the industrial society of the nation state – in which society exacted the calculation and management of contingencies. The second form of modernity, according to Beck, is the post-national and post-industrial society, in which the existing dangers have an inherent tendency to become uncontrollable (Beck 2006). For Beck, the concept of 'risk' designates a phase of development in modern society in which social, political, economic and individual risk increasingly escape disciplinary institutions as well as the protection of industrial societies.

The German sociologist points out that the society of work has radicalised its own logic, which can be summarised as the logic of making efficiency absolute, the integral rationalising of productive processes and the maximisation of the results. Through those procedures designed to intensify productivity, the society of work – understood by Beck as the society which has turned work into the defining feature of its equilibrium, identity and source of public legitimacy – ends up destroying work on a large scale in order to reintroduce elements of uncertainty, precariousness and fear into the realm of labour. In a word, risk.

Beck's characterisation of late modernity as a 'risk society', in which capitalist societies awaken at the other side of their development due to the fact that the production of wealth inherently entails the production of risks, and is in many ways incompatible with the conception of risk that Alicia García addresses. The book explores a notion of risk that is much closer to the work of Foucault. For Beck, risk is a social fact, which means that it retains a certain objectivity, and his analysis focuses on 'non-knowledge' and the inability to politically manage through a certain risk.

From a Foucauldian perspective risk is rather a form of rationality, a means of objectifying events and facts in order to make them governable. A Foucauldian analysis like Alicia García's thus situates risk in the relations between knowledge and power – between the modes through which these are configured through the production of new forms of knowledge.

The author's analysis of control and security, fear and contingency developed in this book intends to recognise, as Foucault did, the productive and not solely repressive dimension of power. From this perspective, it should confront an analysis of shifts in the apparatuses of control from the 1970s onwards. Neoliberal governmentality promotes a kind of regression that is common place in the history of domination and subjectification: the transformation of hope into fear and trust into distrust. For Foucault, the defining slogan of neoliberalism is 'live dangerously', 'there is no liberalism without a culture of danger'. (Foucault, 2008).

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