

Ilustração do demônio Deumus por Louis Le Breton, gravada por M. Jarrault (*Dictionnaire Infernal*, 1863). Arte de domínio público. Composição visual remixada.

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DOSSIÊ LIMIARES DESTITUINTES: POLÍTICA, DIREITO, TEOLOGIA E LINGUAGEM

DESTITUENT THRESHOLDS
OF THE BARE LIFE: BEING-IN-EXODUS*

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Abstract
Starting from Giorgio Agamben's notion of *being-in-exodus*, this article explores the initial possibilities of a shift in the concept of *bare life*, that is, a reinterpretation of the nakedness of life that brings out expressions of resistance, at the same time as point out new commonalities, with a special focus on the philosophical project *Homo sacer*. To this end, the text relates the idea of *being-in-exodus* to contemporary figures who move beyond territories, borders and geographies, such as refugees and survival migrants, as well as to cultural movements that transit through cities, such as the *rolezinhos* and *pancadões*. Such displacements no longer find refuge within ordinary political categories, which is why they must be investigated, as they can effectively carry within them the seeds of a new policy that surpasses the current one. At the same time that they face opposition and are faced with mechanisms of capture, blocking, control and repression, these lives enunciate forms of association, cooperation and contestation, promoting, before difficulties, new uses, paths, new connections, exits and alternatives.

Keywords
Giorgio Agamben, bare life, exodus.

UMBRALES DESTITUYENTES DE LA VIDA DESNUDA: SER-EN-ÉXODO

Resumen
A partir de la noción de *ser-en-éxodo* en Giorgio Agamben, este artículo explora las posibilidades iniciales de un giro en el concepto de *vida desnuda*, es decir, una reinterpretación de la desnudez de la vida que haga emerger, al mismo tiempo, expresiones de resistencia. vez como señalar nuevas comunalidades, con especial atención al proyecto filosófico *Homo sacer*. Para ello, el texto relaciona la idea de *ser-en-éxodo* con figuras contemporáneas que trascienden territorios, fronteras y geografías, como refugiados y migrantes de supervivencia, así como con movimientos culturales que transitan por las ciudades, como los *rolezinhos* y los *pancadões*. Tales desplazamientos ya no encuentran refugio dentro de las categorías políticas ordinarias, razón por la cual deben ser investigados, ya que efectivamente pueden llevar dentro de sí las semillas de una nueva política que supere a la actual. Al mismo tiempo que enfrentan oposición y se enfrentan a mecanismos de captura, bloqueo, control y represión, estas vidas enuncian formas de asociación, cooperación y contestación, promoviendo, frente a las dificultades, nuevos usos, caminos, nuevas conexiones, salidas. y alternativas.

Palabras clave
Giorgio Agamben, vida desnuda, éxodo.

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In incorporating the chapter *Al di là dei diritti dell'uomo* in the book *Mezzi senza fine: note sulla politica*, published in 1996, Giorgio Agamben seeks not only to engage with Hannah Arendt's legacy on the effectiveness of human rights and the problem of refugees but also to revisit the earlier chapter *I diritti dell'uomo e la biopolitica* from the first volume of the series famously named after an exclusionary Roman condemnation, *Homo sacer: il potere sovrano e la nuda vita*, published the previous year in 1995. Within this chapter, the Italian philosopher had already pointed to the paradoxes and inefficiencies of universal human rights in safeguarding the lives of refugees, to the biopolitical conception of natural life and birth in the modern political context, to the fact that twentieth-century fascisms had turned natural life into the "locus par excellence of sovereign decision", to his philosophical conclusion that the refugee calls into question the relationship between birth and nation, thereby revealing "that bare life which constitutes its hidden foundation", as well as the imperative to extricate the refugee from this detrimental framework.[1] Under the pretext of commenting on the 1943 publication of an article by the German thinker in a small Hebrew journal – two years prior the end of the Second World War – where the refugee and stateless condition was framed as a paradigm of *a new historical consciousness* (insofar as, for them, politics becomes a tangible reality and territorial expulsion often results in their becoming the avant-garde of peoples), the philosopher points out that, within the general erosion of the juridical and political categories that sustain modern human coexistence, the refugee emerges not merely as the sole conceivable figure of the people in our time but, above all, as the very image of the forms and boundaries of a *political community to come*. An image that, even while blurred, casts itself forward into the future must guide us toward thinking of other sovereignties and other citizenships, anarchic in nature.

Revisiting the earlier text, it is crucial to advance upon the perception that "in the system of nation-state, the so-called sacred and inalienable human rights are revealed to be without any protection precisely when it is no longer possible to conceive of them as rights of the citizens of a state."[2] More than that, by unveiling what appears to be concealed beneath the grandiosity of universal rights declarations, they would represent the biopolitical inscription of man's natural life within the state order. Birth certified as living by a state order would be the immediate bearer of sovereignty and the source for the attribution of rights.[3] Nevertheless, within a text organized by progressively widening circles, the philosopher will place before us the manifestation of *being-in-exodus*.[4] A significant portion of humanity finds itself in displacement and can no longer find refuge within the ordinary categories of state politics. What previously appeared to be an exception to the universal political condition of human beings on Earth can no longer be dismissed, instead forming a significant stain on contemporary statistical reports. The problem arrives at our doorstep, moving through urban spaces with its own distinctive

[1] Agamben, *Homo sacer*, pp. 142, 145 and 148. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quotes.]

[2] Agamben, *Mezzi senza fine*, p. 23. [TN: *Means without end*, pp. 18-19 of the cited work translated and published into English.]

[3] Cf. Agamben, *Mezzi senza fine*, pp.24-25.

[4] We are not unaware that the original expression *essere-in-esodo* could be translated as *estar-em-êxodo* [to be in exodus]. While the Italian verb *essere* can be translated to Portuguese as either *ser* or *estar*, [to be] depending on context, we favor the translation *ser-em-êxodo* [being-in-exodus] as it suggests a more enduring state and its capacity to maintain semantic continuity with the ontological constitution of *human being*.

hues. The refugee should ten be "considered for what it is, namely, nothing less than a limit-concept that at once brings a radical crisis to the principles of the nation-state".[5] The appeal to the notion of the refugee – the condition that ultimately defines all of us citizens – must dismantle, deterritorialize, cross borders, and depose official geographies and geopolitics. Within the political sphere that concerns the Italian philosopher, yet advancing a claim that serves all humanity, the European citizen could cease being a citizen of a particular state order to recognize themselves as a citizen-in-exodus, being-in-exodus, inhabitant of a geopolitical reality where borders crumble, become porous, and allow free movement, free dwelling, and the free acquisition of rights.

> In an analogous way, we could conceive of Europe not as an impossible "Europe of nations", whose catastrophe one can already foresee in the short run, but rather as an aterritorial or extraterritorial space in which all the (citizens and non-citizens) of the residents of the European states would be in a position of exodus or refuge; the status of European would then mean the being-in-exodus of the citizen (a condition that obviously could also be one of immobility).[6]

Other images of displacement can be found through the three-decade-long project. Distributed across the work, they gain particular prominence in the two final volumes that complete the corpus. In *Altissima povertà: regole monastiche e forma di vita*, with its attempt to investigate the realization of an ideal of common form of life (which could, perhaps ultimately, represent the realization of a form-of-life, a life inseparable from its form), the cenobitic experience emerges as an experience of exodus. The displacement that stands out in this context is certainly that of those who journey toward monastic communities, leaving behind their homes and former lives to partake in communal living. This displacement is identified from the outset as both flight from the world and exile, a displacement that, for both the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria and the philosopher-archbishop Ambrose of Milan, amounts to the establishment of a new public sphere.[7] Exile would constitute the condition of those who choose to inhabit this community of life, much like the life of an expatriate, someone living outside their place of origin, altering their belonging. Yet another form of displacement comes into view when monasticism intersects with the religious movements of the early second millennium of the Christian era, movements that defined less the community rule and more life itself, the manner of living, and the distinctive practices of common life.[8] The Franciscan paradigm, which storms the book's content, exemplifies one of these movements. As voluntary pilgrims, the image of displacement gains even greater clarity when we consider Francis's resistance and refusal to build convents in Assisi and its surroundings.

In the extensive *L'uso dei corpi*, particularly in its third section, the image of exile reappears to define the philosopher's life in Plotinus, a state of solitude, happiness, and lightness. This inclination toward flight and exile, being exiled, borrowed from legal and political lexicon to convey a mystical and philosophical state, articulates a distinct form of

[5] Agamben, *Mezzi senza fine*, p. 26. [TN: *Means without end*, pp. 18-19 of the cited work translated and published into English.]
[6] Agamben, *Mezzi senza fine*, p. 28. [TN: *Means without end*, pp. 18-19 of the cited work translated and published into English.]
[7] Cf. Agamben, *Altissima povertà*, pp. 65-68.
[8] Cf. Agamben, *Altissima povertà*, pp. 115-119.

abandonment that again implies displacement. There is a passage here that warrants complete citation.

> Taking up the juxtaposition between philosophical life and exile, Plotinus pushes it to the extreme, proposing a new and more enigmatic figure of the ban. The relation of the ban in which bare life is held, which we have identified in *Homo Sacer I* as the fundamental political relationship, is laid claim to and assumed as his own by the philosopher. But in this gesture, it is transformed and inverted into something positive, having been posed as a figure of a new and happy intimacy, of an "alone by oneself" as a cipher of a superior politics. Exile from politics cedes its place to a politics of exile.[9]

Setting aside the contentious philosopher-political relationship – traceable to Plato's dialogs and notably highlighted by Hannah Arendt on multiple occasions – along with the conceptual discomfort of linking politics with solitude, *alone by oneself,* (an association seemingly antithetical to politics' fundamental nature: that humans necessarily live collectively and are irrevocably bound to structure common life), the passage instead points toward a higher-order politics emerging from a renewed understanding of *ban*. That which at the inception of the philosophical project was linked to abandonment, condemnation, and exclusion-inclusion is now reclaimed through the gesture of voluntary exile, potentially bearing within itself the seeds of a politics able to transcend the corroded politics we have known until now. Could this exile be another way of expressing *being-in-exodus*?

Migrants challenge us through their displacements. Moving from one place to another, on journeys into which they pour their whole heart and all their hope, risking what they know to head toward the unknown – creating crossings, forging paths –, they reveal dimensions of human life we only access when confronted with images of mobility and crossing. Could migrants emerge as the vanguard of a new people rising against borders and the very concept of national sovereignty? Might they represent the avant-garde of another politically conceivable human life, as *being-in-exodu*s, as *form-of-life*, as an alternative *bare life*? Ultimately, can we reconsider human life as *migration*, regardless of its voluntary or involuntary nature? Would not someone who moves, who is not in their birthplace, transitioning between locations, be the very expression of the most elementary human condition, given that, our planet's cosmic revolution and life's finite continuity through time, are we not all essentially in migration? To imagine the being-in-exodus as potentially empowering citizens within contemporary political structures demands creative thought, though not excessive, nothing beyond our empirical and sensory experiences.

> A political space that is anti-sovereign and extraterritorial would be the environment of a *being-in-exodus* that defines the condition of being political. It might be challenging, yet it is not inconceivable, to imagine a global political community comprised of pilgrims and wanderers, citizens who are *beings-in-exodus* and take a stand in human affairs, engage in public life, and secure rights wherever they are. Migrants contest the categories of sovereignty and territory, challenging us to imagine another world. Conceiving the migrant as a desired bare life would be to reconsider

[9] Agamben, *L'uso dei corpi*, pp. 300-301. [TN: *The Use of Bodies*, p. 236 of the cited work translated and published into English.]

> life as migration, the outcome of a deliberate crossing, the movement from one place to another, which in the end replicates the most ordinary human condition.[10]

People depart from their places of origin for numerous reasons. Departures are common and pinpointing the exact and exhaustive reasons behind someone's decision to leave or stay in a particular location is not always easy. While work conditions and personal relationships appear to be primary motivators, not everyone who leaves does so by choice, driven by a desire for mobility, the experience of leaving, arriving in the unknown, and navigating distance. There are those compelled to depart and others who are unable to leave; in both instances, the decision to depart lies beyond their reach. Among those who set out, an untold number never reach their destination. Those who do arrive aspire to be welcomed and engage actively in the political life of their new setting, with a fundamental expectation of securing rights and opportunities.[11] Contemporary brutalism expresses itself through the management of human circulation, the inequity between low-risk citizens retaining border-crossing privileges and undesirable persons enduring intensifying dehumanizing controls, plus those confined to circular trajectories, this imprisoned humanity. As Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe emphasizes, "together with climate change, the governance of human mobility is set to be the major problem of the twenty-first century". In the mapping of human bodies moving across the earth's surface, "not everything runs smoothly. Physical roughness persists. Many passageways are blocked. Controls and constraints are tightening, and periods of forced inactivity are increasing. As are deportations. [...] In many regions of the globe, systematic surveillance is already the rule",[12] particularly within a context of population distribution amid chaotic growth and escalating resource scarcity. Thus, segregation patterns mirror the gradual transition from property-based economies to possession, and from possession to access-based relations.[13]

The conceptual division of humanity through borders proved catastrophic. Borders relate to nature and the planet's surface as private property and commodities relate to human life in perspective: they may bring temporary benefits but ultimately prove to be mere chimera and fallacy. Yet borders extend far beyond a nation's territorial limits, beyond invisible boundaries, geographic barriers, migration checkpoints, customs controls, border patrols, or tactical army positioning. Borders also permeate what the African philosopher called *border-bodies*.

> The border institution is the mechanism by which this new division becomes part of reality. Moreover, borders are no longer made of irreversible lines that only rarely cross. They are no longer exclusively physical. They are fundamentally hybrid and deliberately incomplete and segmented. If they are sites par excellence that manifest today's depredation, it is because they are the point of convergence formed by various measures that ensure the managing and regulation of the living as well as the unequal distribution of the perils we face.[14]

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[10] Nascimento, *Agamben contra Agamben*, p. 115. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[11] Cf. Mbembe, *Brutalismo*, pp. 195-198.
[12] Mbembe, *Brutalismo*, pp. 165-166. [TN: *Brutalism*, p. 91 of the cited work translated and published into English.]
[13] Cf. Rifkin, *A era do acesso*, p. 93.
[14] Mbembe, *Brutalismo*, p. 144. [TN: *Brutalism*, p. 78 of the cited work translated and published into English.]

Contemporary migrant detention centers, often disguised with euphemistic names suggesting shelter or aid, represent the modern manifestation of the space of exception. These spaces operate as privileged sites for biopolitical experimentation and reinvented extermination techniques. Readers familiar with Giorgio Agamben's work, especially in sections where his writing engages directly with specific contemporary political instances, will readily identify his distinctive mode of thought. However, without diminishing the historical fact that stateless persons and political refugees constituted the bulk of new migratory flows of uprooted people since the early twentieth century, we now witness a shifting paradigm that brings into focus survival migrants, for whom economic motivations for displacement play an increasingly dominant role. Far from the image of the self-entrepreneur – those who migrate as career investment or opportunity-seekers, assuming calculated, reversible risks –, we encounter migrants fleeing their homelands to escape destitution, hunger, and vital exhaustion, migrating simply to ensure basic survival.

> This rational framework negatively objectifies survival migrations flowing from impoverished to affluent nations. While human capital logic values mobile subjects who reject fixed positions (both geographically and, denotatively, within capital's productive and reproductive relations), it simultaneously regulates this mobility, dividing it between good and bad. The neoliberal logic of human capital is biopolitical because it prizes risk-taking individuals who self-invest, while abandoning those who risk everything, including their lives, for mere survival. The result: a selective valorization of risk and an encouragement of mobility, but not all mobility.[15]

Survival migrants are not merely economically exploited, filling underpaid and informal jobs – the very jobs local workers, enjoying more favorable labor market positions, consistently disregard. They end up fulfilling a political function within the partisan-political system that characterizes our world. There are numerous party-aligned voices in the receiving countries that speak out against these migration flows and the individuals who successfully cross borders and enter their territories. Not coincidentally, the establishment of physical and social barriers is a flagship policy of the rising far-right in European countries, which has already taken deep root in North America and holds significant sway in South American countries. However, the patriotic appeals in our region have not yet focused their aggressive impulses primarily on migrants, largely because our migratory context differs from that of the Northern Hemisphere.[16] A dual dynamic is at play: migrants seeking survival are positioned as potential threats, dealt with as a law enforcement issue, while simultaneously being regarded as potential tools, cheap labor, addressed as a matter of a political case. In either case, they are subject to a biopower that focuses on the circulation, containment, monitoring, and control of vast population groups.

[15] Candiotto, *O governo biopolítico do migrante de sobrevivência*, p. 99. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]

[16] This scenario in Brazil could undoubtedly change in the near future if the increase in external migrations draws more attention than the settling of accounts with the country's minorities. Currently, migratory flows from Haiti and Venezuela northward, along with Bolivian and Nigerian migrations within São Paulo's metropolitan region, have yet to impact the national imaginary.

> Thus, while survival migrants are morally casted as clandestine, vagabonds, and potential terrorists, they remain politically and economically exploited – and therefore useful. They serve a political utility, as the establishment of new social and anthropological boundaries reinforces the archaic return of nationalist collective identities aimed at reaffirming an already eroded sovereignty, within which migrants are produced as permanent threats to the *vivre-ensemble*.[17]

Yet, amid the proliferation of global crises spawning permanent spaces of exception, survival migrants cross not only national boundaries but also borders nested within borders – that is, spaces once considered planned or subject to proper regulation. Established powers manage this bare life through multiple means: either through direct obstruction and suppression, creating actual collective prison camps as seen along the US-Mexican frontier and Italian shores, or through their nominal incorporation into precarious work regimes exemplified by São Paulo's daily flows of human masses between city centers and outlying borders amid worsening conditions. And we are aware that "organizing flows demands immense effort to organize a flow, to segregate, to grant or deny access, to block one passage while facilitating another, to change direction, to incorporate or exclude elements".[18] Thus, "the contemporary individual is compelled to survive", trapped within their own immediate needs. These migrants "are positioned in locations and circumstances where life-sustaining functions are put to work reproducing their condition",[19] lives whose exposure to exhaustion is intensified by power's stratagems.

What happens is that, if on the one hand the circulation flows allow for the "expropriation of the life networks of the majority of the population by capital"[20] in a kind of vampirization of subjectivity, on the other hand, they enable a vital reversal that is manifested in new forms of association, cooperation, and contestation, as well as a new relationship with the environment around us. It may be in this very subtlety that lie the signs of a *being-in-exodus* capable of reimagining *bare life*, for the struggle for survival produces not only a docile body but also derives them to experiment with new uses, traverse new paths, connect objects, find exits, create alternatives. Inspired by Franz Kafka's short story "The Great Wall of China", Professor Peter Pál Pelbart seeks to explore this reversal, highlighting the unease caused by the nomads arriving from the north. Even before the immense structure, the nomads in their erratic circulation along borders found cracks and gaps through which they entered the empire and settled in the central square – under open sky, facing the imperial palace –, thus inverting the very logic of sovereign protection and trapping the ruling elite. The nomads possess "wide-gaping mouths, sharp teeth, eat raw meat beside their horses, speak like crows, roll their eyes and constantly sharpen their knives". Strange and unfamiliar with local customs, without any intention of storming the power structure, they disrupt the empire's heart so profoundly that while wandering its streets, even before its institutions, they simultaneously escape its mechanisms. In other words, the nomad "is always inside and outside, [...] occupies a territory while simultaneously dismantling it, [...] slips away, slides, refuses the game or subverts its meaning, corrodes the very field and thus resists dominant injunctions".[21]

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[17] Candiotto, *O governo biopolítico do migrante de sobrevivência*, p. 102. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[18] Lima, *Vida nos trilhos*, p. 113. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[19] Lima, *Vida nos trilhos*, p. 119. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[20] Pelbart, *Vida capital*, p. 21. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[21] Pelbart, *Vida capital*, pp. 19-20. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]

This scenario reveals that when peripheral subjects, migrants, and the outcasts circulate, they are swiftly identified, not by a yellow star sewn onto their clothing, but as impoverished individuals with the appearance of poverty, recognizable by their facial features, their sly way of walking, their peculiar attire, their non-hegemonic hairstyles, their slang, the skin tone, or the sounds they produce. As nomads, they move about, provoking a certain estrangement, a certain disorganization, disrupting the planned lines of the city, the routine, the delimited borders of the nation-state, and the subtle boundaries of spaces designed for specific social classes As they circulate, they call into question the modern logic, simultaneously invoking the fear and reaction of the empire, while also expressing challenging modes of being, perhaps even challenging *forms-of-life*. Indeed, while capitalism depends on the rapid circulation of flows of all kinds—capital, information, images, goods, knowledge, services, and people—, not everything circulates in the same way everywhere, and consequently, not everyone benefits from this circulation. Trade networks are established that exploit the forms-of-life of migrants in an ever-more utilitarian sense, but also survival networks that build solidarity among them, establishing a new relationship between those who migrate and the territories they cross.

We cannot forget that life abandoned on the threshold is always a life that is both inside and outside at the same time, which brings to mind another figure employed by Giorgio Agamben in *Homo sacer: il potere sovrano e la nuda vita*, borrowed from Germanic law and known as *wargus*, the wolf, or rather, the wolf-man. A figure that stands out due to its strangeness, stereotypically associated with the werewolf, popularly conceived as a monstrous hybrid between human and beast, torn between the wilderness and the city. Banished from the community, simultaneously the emblem of sovereignty and expelled from the city, the *wargus* is the body that circulates through the world despite having been exposed and placed on the threshold where the outside and inside become indistinguishable, in a state of paradoxical abandonment. As they move between the city and the wilderness, they disrupt the order, blur the boundaries between the two spaces, and put their own identity into question, neither human nor wolf. This creates a *zone of indistinction* where limits are reworked, thereby altering both the bodies that circulate and the very space in which they circulate. In the perspective we are proposing, every migrant body carries a hint of the *wargus*, crossing territories and defying urban planning, borders, legal order, and moral codes of conduct. These are *issues* that walk, awakening a wide range of feelings, introducing tensions, and demanding responses, like nomads at the heart of the empire, disrupting the daily life and resignifying the concept of the *ban*.

From this emerges the creation of networks of cooperation, information exchange, support, mutual aid, and new modes of conviviality, such as the *rolezinhos* and *pancadões*, which anarchically disrupt the largest Brazilian metropolis and its commuter neighborhoods.[22] The sociological literature has positioned both phenomena as youth manifestations "predominantly situated in popular sectors, connected *online*, without explicit political demands, but with an implicit agenda of demands – the right to leisure,

[22] *Rolezinho* is a slang term used in the outskirts of São Paulo to describe the activity of peripheral youth who decide to walk in bans through the city streets with the intention of having fun. Typically, the *rolezinhos* focus on shopping centers, causing a stir among the middle classes, who feel uneasy about the crowds of poor young people who invade these social spaces, laughing, chatting, speaking loudly, and blasting music. *Pancadão* refers to Brazilian funk raves typically organized on public streets, characterized by massive crowds, loud music, and heavy drink.

fun, and consumer temples".[23] According to the classifications typically employed, they are not regarded as social movements, but rather as "cultural acts, created/invoked by individual figures, who gain fame and mobilize legions of *online* 'likers' and followers in collective events".[24] What is important to mention, however, is that such phenomena focused on circulation briefly and forcefully disrupt the metropolitan work dynamic and reclaim public spaces for leisure and pleasure. Chaos sets in as massive flows of young people move through the city's streets, challenging the traditional demarcations between public and private spheres. Right in the midst of this urban chaos, we see, along with Professor Fabiano Torres, "a living set of strategies", that is, new ways of gathering, working (such as the party organizers), or creating meaning, "the meaning of life: fooling around, making out, living life, humility", which ultimately means "inventing apparatus of valorization and self-valorization" as an imperative to survive in inhospitable territories. This might explain why they are approached both as matters of law enforcement and cultural policy, depending on the circumstances and the governmental political context.[25] In order to plunge into the concrete life of the cities that surround us with their endless concrete, bot horizontal and vertical, and to claim experiences of exodus that are closer to us, we aim to dwell briefly on the investigation of these phenomena – without, however, idealizing them, given that they are known to entail relationships that push the involvement of the bodies themselves to the extreme, relationships that are dangerous, whether through substance abuse, unprotected sex, ties to organized crime networks, or even the mere replication of the capitalist discourse of consumption.

Following the emergence of *rolezinhos*, the massive circulation observed in the food courts of shopping centers has sparked a renewed debate about the ethical and legal boundaries of public and private spaces, the socio-spatial organization of cities, and economic inequalities, while also introducing significant logistical challenges for access control and surveillance apparatuses. The first reaction came from business owners and shopkeepers, who, fearing the disruption, shut down their stores, called the police, and treated the phenomenon as a riot or tumult.[26] In January 2014, the high-end JK Iguatemi Shopping Center, located in an upscale area of São Paulo, took the issue to court, a court order that barred the entry of young people unaccompanied by parents or guardians into its premises. In November 2016, a new *rolezinho* scheduled through social media to celebrate the three-year anniversary of the first gathering at the Metrô Itaquera Shopping Center received over three thousand RSVPs. Around fifteen hundred young people arrived,

[23] Gohn, *Sociologia dos movimentos sociais*, p. 88. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]

[24] Gohn, *Sociologia dos movimentos sociais*, p. 89. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]

[25] Torres, *Travessias do beco*, p. 84. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]

[26] One of the first gatherings that took place and drew the attention of the mainstream media occurred on December 8, 2013, when over six thousand young people suddenly entered the Metrô Itaquera Shopping Center in São Paulo, according to the shopping center's management. On December 22, 2013, following a *rolezinho* at Interlagos Shopping Center in the same city, four young people were taken into custody for questioning without any evidence of theft. On January 4, 2014, the Metrô Tucuruvi Shopping Center closed three hours early due to an event with four hundred young people. On January 11, at the same shopping center, the Military Police detained two young people again. Similar incidents were reported in several Brazilian cities, such as Guarulhos, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Contagem, and Vitória (cf. Portal G1, *Conheça a história dos rolezinhos em São Paulo* [*Get to know the story of rolezinhos in São Paulo*].)

only to be turned away at the door by court officials and a large police apparatus.[27] The fear of business owners, therefore, furthered the judicialization of the problem, shifting its scope to the domain of criminal law.[28]

Regarding the *pancadões*, conflicts have intensified, as the open circulation in public streets complicates judicial measures aimed at controlling and containing displacements. This, in turn, substantially alters the social dynamics of the neighborhoods. The grievances regarding noise, roadblocks on streets and avenues, as well as drug and alcohol abuse rapidly gave rise to an openly repressive policy, in which Military Police special operations units dispersed the crowds by means of force without any mediation.[29] In order to justify direct repression, the State of São Paulo initially responded to the *pancadões* by linking them to *disorder*. The Bill No. 455 of 2015, which resulted in Law No. 16,049/2015, proposed by state representatives Colonel Camilo and Colonel Telhada, aimed to tackle the phenomenon by regulating the emission of sound noise from portable sound devices or those installed in parked motor vehicles. The justification provided was that its occurrence in unsuitable locations led to disorder, insecurity, and dissatisfaction, that the lyrics of the music incited violence, libidinous acts, and drug use, that the actions of some attendees demonstrated actual drug consumption, the sale of alcoholic beverages to minors, offenses to public decency, disturbance of the peace and rest of the population, blockage of access to residential areas, and potential health risks resulting from noise pollution.[30] Ultimately, the discourse that arose from state intervention consistently held that the disorder caused by young people and adolescents was pervasive and inevitably descended into violence and corruption, a narrative that was repeated in several bills proposed at the federal level with the goal of eliminating the phenomenon across the country.

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[27] Cf. Araújo, *Após início de rolezinho, jovens são retirados do Shopping Metrô Itaquera* [*Rolezinho at Shopping Metrô Itaquera ends with youths being escorted out*].

[28] According to a survey conducted by the Núcleo de Assessoria Popular de Ribeirão Preto, at least twenty-seven prohibitory injunctions were reviewed in the first and second instances of the São Paulo Court of Justice in 2014. In eleven out of thirteen cases in the first instance, there was not even a response from the defendants, revealing a stark disparity in access to the Judiciary between shopping center representatives and the young people involved. As for the content of the thirteen first-instance decisions on prohibitory injunctions, five ruled against the shopping centers' requests, while eight ruled in their favor. In percentage terms, the State Court rejected the shopping centers' request for an injunction in 38.5% of the cases, thereby denying them the power to prohibit young people's access to their establishments. Despite this, in three of these cases, the court issued a formal request directly to the Military Police to ensure security at the site (cf. SEVERI; FRIZZARIM, *Dossiê Rolezinhos* [*Rolezinhos Report*]).

[29] In 2019, a Military Police operation targeting a *pancadão* in the Paraisópolis favela led to the deaths of nine young people. In the same year, around seven thousand five hundred similar operations were conducted by the Military Police of the State of São Paulo, yielding 1,275 arrests and the confiscation of 1.7 tons of drugs. The method employed involves the use of less-lethal weaponry, such as rubber bullets and gas bombs, fired at times in tight spaces for the purpose of dispersing the crowd (cf. ALESSI, *Repressão a bailes funk em São Paulo tem tiro no olho e 1.275 presos só neste ano* [*Crackdown on funk raves in São Paulo ends in eye shots and 1,275 arrests this year alone*]).

[30] Here, we witness a whole common rhetoric of repression, with which we obviously do not agree. Nevertheless, some problems might be raised regarding the situation pointed out. Without resorting to moralism, we think that excessive alcohol consumption erodes revolutionary energies, just as any other form of numbness does. It takes intelligence to push our own bodies to the limit.

At the time, São Paulo Mayor Fernando Haddad responded to *rolezinhos* by acknowledging that young people needed more public spaces to express themselves. Consequently, in February 2014, he launched a program called *Rolezinhos da Cidadania*, offering lighting, sound, and stage facilities at Ibirapuera Park. The events were organized after a series of meetings facilitated by the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of São Paulo and the Municipal Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality, leading to the establishment of a new association, consisting of more than fifty young people selected based on their number of followers on social media, to organize and represent the movement and events throughout the city, including in outlying neighborhoods. The press reported that the program turned *rolezinhos* into a profitable business, while at the same time reporting the occurrence of crimes at the events supported by the Public Authorities and the increase in police security measures. Along the same lines, in an attempt to resolve the problem of *pancadões*, Governor Geraldo Alckmin signed a partnership with the São Paulo City Hall in 2015, organizing a rotation system through areas of the city, aiming to channel large flows of young people to parks, stadiums, and squares, controlling access, start and end times, and dispersal routes. However, this model was abruptly discontinued under the subsequent governments of João Doria, both in his municipal administration and later in the state government, adopting a broadly repressive strategy, labeling the phenomenon as a plague and consistently linking it to organized crime.[31] It was only after the fallout from the deaths in Paraisópolis caused by police repression that the then-governor launched *Favela Fest*, a program to decrease the occurrence of *pancadões* through partnerships with the private sector and third-sector organizations, but it was unsuccessful.

Three key points need to be noted here. The first is that both phenomena feature significant displacements within cities and provoke strong reactions, all aimed at stopping the circulation of precarious lives or at the very least controlling it. The simple act of displacement in an unusual way is already seen as offensive, just as these young people being in places where, theoretically, they should not be. The second point is that, given the ineffectiveness of state repressive responses, efforts towards collaboration and cooptation emerge around cultural policies that include private sector and third-sector initiatives, turning the phenomena into businesses and inscribing them within the market logic. Ultimately, it is worth underlining the persistent discourse that links the nomadism of these young people to criminality. It is true that the wandering of *pancadões* and *rolezinhos* and the way they dilute the socio-spatial organization of cities challenge traditional political ways of handling urban social conflicts. The violent and sometimes desperate forms of state response show that something has escaped control, that something has stopped working, be it the divisions and spatial arrangements of segregation, the clear-cut borders, or the access controls and mechanisms of urban order reproduction. The fear that announces itself as fear of crime or banditry is also the fear of the *ban*, a kind of *ban form-of-life* that refuses the current formatting of the city. Not coincidentally, the discourse that associates these phenomena with the old riots immediately brings to mind the widespread fear in Rio de Janeiro in the 1980s and 1990s, as a "politics of fear that stimulates the creation of fortified enclaves symbolized by closed

[31] Cf. G1 Portal, *Doria diz que 'pancadões' em SP são organizados por integrantes de facção criminosa* [*Doria alleges 'pancadões' in São Paulo are linked to organized crime groups*].

condominiums and shopping centers",[32] where "the fear of thugs is, in fact, the fear of the poor".[33] At any rate, what is striking is the fact that both the state's response and the market's response have failed, and the massive flows of young people continue to circulate everywhere, turning the city of São Paulo into a true urban hell, anarchically challenging attempts to control and capture them. A *rolezinho* lacks hierarchy, it is not a movement, it has neither a leader nor representatives, it simply emerges through horizontalized calls on social media, similar to a swarm or a legion that gathers and then disperses. When the police crackdown on a *pancadão* in a specific neighborhood block, it breaks into a thousand fragments and proliferates, invading other streets and reconfiguring itself two or three blocks away, constantly deconstructing the city's geography, making space mobile, blurring coordinates, and precluding preventive actions. When state governments and the market attempt to channel these mobilizations according to a specific narrative, what emerges is defection, simple refusal, and yet, these forms of communal life appear to endure, persisting in re-emerging. This entire scenario ought to provoke a question: what is being generated through this perseverance in hostile territories?

Wandering and confronting borderline situations turns life into a laboratory of experimentation, an unusual learning process, "as a *pathei mathos*, what is learned only through and after suffering, and excludes any possibility of foresight – that is, of knowing anything whatsoever with certainty",[34] that occasionally gives rise to new forms of existence and behavior in the face of established powers. Everything shifts: forms of knowledge circulate, new perspectives unfold, and from within the chaotic interior, fragments of different cultures emerge, along with slang and modes of speech that subvert languages, new signs and symbols, hybrid assemblages, and aesthetic experiences that proliferate. This means that not all paths are closed, there is always a *remainder* through which the excluded, disaffiliated, and disconnected resist the broad processes of expropriation and resale of ways of life carried out by the enticements of contemporary capitalism. In other words, life itself, in its precarious subsistence, is used as a vector of self-valorization, giving rise to a *communality of self-valorization* through which creative forces, in reciprocal affectation, overflow into lines of exodus, exemplified by Kafka's nomads who, while not constituting immediate alternatives of confrontation with the empire, at least denounce that there is something in its functioning that results in pure *dysfunction*.[35] By leveraging the semantic inversion between *power over life* and *the potential of life*, and the conceptual emergence of the *multitude* element as a biopolitical body that metamorphoses into an immense source of energy, a notion particularly promoted by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, we might ask how migratory groups, *beings-in-exodus*, unleash forces and leverage anti-systemic political realities. We take up the reflection of the Hungarian philosopher cited below.

> The lingering question is how these elements of virtuality that constitute the multitude can reach a threshold of realization in accordance with their power, outmaneuvering the imperial strategies that strive to neutralize their subjective and explosive potential [...] their irrepressible force of creating value, their immanent labor, their modes of

[32] Caldeira, *Cidade de muros*, p. 258. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[33] Cardoso, *A cidadania em sociedades multiculturais*, p. 378. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[34] Agamben, *Infância e história*, p. 27. [TN: *Infancy & History*, p. 19 of the cited work translated and published into English.]
[35] Cf. Pelbart, *Vida capital*, pp. 22-24.

> cooperation and community, but also of exodus, escape, desertion. [...] In any case, even if it's clear how challenging it is to turn the multitude into a concrete political operator, its ability to nourish our political imagination is considerable, particularly when the theoretical context that frames it is spelled out.[36]

At this point, we are close to what Antonio Negri, drawing on the unstable terrain of Baruch Spinoza, referred to as the potential of the poor, a kind of communion, cooperation that emerges in precarity, in the face of the challenges imposed by survival itself as a spark for "joys that are immediately shared, based on the autonomy of affective, social, and productive networks".[37] Something akin to what Giuseppe Cocco, in the context of the debate between the *becoming-world of Brazil* and the *becoming-Brazil of the world*, refers to as an *ethics of the potential of the poor*, categorically rejecting the focus on misery, poverty, and violence in the peripheries.[38] This means saying that within precariousness, there is also social potential and cooperative solidarity. According to the Paduan philosopher, what is key to transforming the private into the common is the *love that ceaselessly opens itself to broader communities*. The multitude that insinuates itself in this context is composed of singularities that are, above all, living labor, capacity for production that presents itself as virtual cooperation in overcoming the obstacles inherent to inhospitable territories. A perspective that subverts the game, rendering the precariousness of life both nakedness and production, especially because potential is not understood as a mere concept, as an abstract ontology. On the contrary, it is a concrete ontology that always presents itself as historical, with a fully productive nature, never empty, through everyday practices of confronting scarcity and the degradation of life. Looking at general intelligence as a strategy for confronting established powers, it becomes clear that "the resistance of bodies produces subjectivity not in an isolated and individualistic state, but in a dynamic complex in which the resistances of other bodies are linked together".[39] From the frailty of subjected bodies and the fatigue of bodies that keep moving without pause, new forms of *counter-exploitation* arise simultaneously, the indomitable productivity of individual and collective bodies generating unprecedented popular experiences, new social organizations, and alternative modes of association among people. From this perspective, the fear that drives authoritarian responses is not so much the fear that the poor will smash everything and dismantle the city, but that the poor will perceive these threads of *commonalities* and weave a new city.

Revisiting Giorgio Agamben's philosophical path, it becomes clear that a relationship of opposition exists between the *camp* that emerges whenever a structure of exception and violence is established in a particular space, "independent of the kinds of crimes that are committed there and whatever its denomination and specific topography",[40] the aggressive emblem of the inaugural volume of his critical editorial program, and the *coming community*, that community that is whatever, comprised of whatever singularities, without sovereign subjects and messianic, regardless of the degree of creative potential they may harbor within themselves, which he had earlier announced particularly in *La comunità che viene* (1990). As confrontation, contestation,

[36] Pelbart, *Vida capital*, p. 85. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[37] Negri, *A pobreza não é déficit de ser*, p. 01. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[38] Cf. Cocco, *Mundo braz*, p. 42.
[39] Negri, *A pobreza não é déficit de ser*, p. 01. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.]
[40] Agamben, *Homo sacer*, p. 195. [TN: *Homo Sacer*, p. 98 of the cited work translated and published into English.]

and resistance to the camps that continue to open in the face of the dictates of sovereign exception, there are the anti-camps that emerge in revolt and defiance, releasing potentials that refuse to be controlled. We consider here whether migrants, through their movements and occupations, might be the harbingers of these cycles of emancipation, given that anti-camps are utopian, yet simultaneously very tangible.

> Anti-camps include the spaces occupied in Wall Street by Occupy movement protesters, the hippie communities of the 1960s and 1970s, Tahrir Square in Cairo during the uncertainty of Egypt's political future, the anarchist-republican militias of the Spanish Civil War that rejected leadership, the idle lands seized by landless workers in Brazil, the abandoned buildings taken over by anarchist groups in Barcelona and Athens, among numerous other instances. In a concise definition: an anti-camp arises where and when the divergent future of utopia manifests itself not as a project or imaginary blueprint, but as the reality of potential.[41]

Liminal forces of destitution are inevitably at the service of *bare life*, perhaps in its affluence of migration towards *form-of-life*. Within this context, *being-in-exodus* can function as a paradigm. Especially since what does not change is that exodus is the ontological constitution of being.

[41] Matos, *Filosofia radical e utopia*, pp. 95-96. [TN: Free English translation of the Portuguese quote.] There has been considerable speculation about whether the June Days of 2013 protests that took to the Brazilian streets could be included in this exemplary list and configure an *anti-camp* movement. With many years having elapsed since the event and aware of the subsequent political developments in the national context, we observe how those masses of multiple and contradictory outrages also served as conduits for the release of long-standing conservatisms and resentments. Given that a woman belonging to a supposedly left-wing party was then in the presidency of the Brazilian government, with substantial aid from major corporate media, a considerable amount of the unleashed energy was redirected against initiatives aimed at reducing economic and social inequalities or against politics and democracy, even though the intention regarding the latter remained unavowed and the rhetoric of defending democracy was shamelessly co-opted. Anti-camps are anti-systems that are hegemonic and exclusionary, not the other way around.

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