

For an Anthropology of State Death Production. A Critical Review and an Update of the Concept of Democide

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ABSTRACT: *This article proposes a critical and contextualized reprise and revision in the anthropological field of the notion of «democide» formulated by the politologist Rudolph J. Rummel and its relationship with the themes of death production and necropolitics. By conducting a critical confrontation with the ethnographic dimension and with the anthropological literature relating to the study of the state (and its sovereignty) and the contexts and themes of violence, power and domination, at the same time, it is possible to acknowledge and recognize the importance and the applicability of this concept, as well as the innovative possibilities (in terms of deepening and analytical reading) that may result from its integration among the epistemological-conceptual instruments in endowment to anthropology and its application. This notion would help to enrich and broaden the understanding of matrices, declensions and political responsibilities at the basis of specific socio-political processes and dynamics, experienced in the research fields, which determine phenomena and events adhering to the sphere of death production (or 'necropoiesis').*

In light of this, a more specific anthropological study is advisable, if not urgent, through an interdisciplinary approach that allows us to identify and distinguish the “gradations” of democidal phenomena.

KEYWORDS - *Continuum of violence, death production, democide, power, state*

I. INTRODUCTION

The State, in its configuration of domination as well as in the power and violence that found it, embodies «a wide and multifaceted subject of investigation» (Gardini 2016[1], p. 7) to be addressed on several levels of analysis, whose themes have been for several centuries among the main strands involving transversally the research and reflection by humanistic scientific and academic disciplines. Anthropology, due in particular to the interdisciplinary and dialogical approach entertained with political philosophy, history, sociology and legal sciences, managed to trigger a «broad body of ethnographic analysis and theoretical reflections analyzing the concrete modalities of the exercise of state power, the daily interactions of subjects with the state and the practices and discourses through which its legitimacy is reproduced, contested and renegotiated» (*ibidem*).

Violence, power, and domination are elements, even experiential, of primary relevance in the research and in the epistemological-conceptual reflection of the contemporary anthropological scape. The awareness of the urge to recognize and examine the matrices and the modalities of their declinations and structuring, as well as to give specific attention to the long-term consequences, to the “fixed costs” of suffering, tensions, illness and death that their activities place on individuals and societies has become increasingly established. The concept of violence and genocidal continuum (Bourgois, Scheper-Hughes 2004[2]) is crucial to underline the constant dynamism of power and domination and their endemic and “local” propagation (Beneduce 2008[3]), the micro-physical pervasiveness (Foucault 1977[4]) and the subtlety of their circulation and affirmation with multiple and heterogeneous forms and phenomena, distributed in a differentiated way for intensity and detrimental effects. The inscription and manifestation of these effects in the grain of collective and individual life indelibly mark the biographies, identities and interactions - as well as health - of subjects and socio-political-cultural tissues (Fassin

2019[5]) and become silently central and strongly binding elements.

Through an epistemological-conceptually based critical analysis rooted in comparison with ethno-anthropological sources and writings, this article focuses on the issue of death production of death (or *necropoiesis*¹) by the States, theme that has gained new impetus thanks to the formulation of the concept of democide by the US politologist Rudolph J. Rummel. This concept primarily means the intentional killing of unarmed and defenceless people and populations by governments (Rummel 2005[5]), both among their own and others, as a strategic instrument of action used to «fulfill political goals and reasons (reasons of state or power)» (ibid, p. XLI). Rummel's studies and analyses, which look to a greater extent at the great mass murders carried out during the Twentieth Century, provide impressive data and numbers to show and confirm that States, in their existence and conservation, are «the primary source of insecurity, fear and death» (Vitale 2002[6], p. XVII). States are, in fact, the socio-political² establishments (Boni[7] 2011) primarily authors and responsible for the prefiguration and triggering of similar phenomena and events, or at least (in Rummel's perspective) of those attributable to them in the most immediate way and in which they are directly involved.

In Rummel's analysis, the approach focused on the 'macro' profiles of the historical and socio-institutional issues and onto quantitative data, in terms of human victims, of the cases he examined overlooks and undermines the in-depth study of the dynamics and of the social, political, and historical trajectories constantly characterizing the paths of state formations under the banner of multiple forms of violence and devaluation of lives. These latter decisively orientate the possibilities and the faculty to design, promote and shape situations and contexts in which the murder of (certain categories of) civilians is carried out and fully endorsed to achieve certain political goals. Therefore, the primal notion of democide shows its need for an update which allows it to widen its possible applications in relation to state necropoietic phenomenology and its creation of "pre-" and "proto-democidal" socio-political conditions and climates.

The subject of "direct" and immediate death production, indeed, constitutes «anthropology's primal scene» (Bourgeois, Scheper-Hughes 2004, p. 5) – especially that of violence –, which has the ability and the main task (Farmer 2004[9]) to de-naturalize the incessant becoming of power and violence and their automated internalization and participation in the dynamism of daily social relationships. Its other task is to bring to light the multiple ways in which every society (and State) comes to «hide from itself how much suffering is imposed on individuals as the toll of their belonging to it» (Das 1997[10], p. 563) and to be insensitive to the violence that runs through it (Galtung 1990[11], Feldman 2002[12], Farmer 2004).

These elements make it possible to recognize the inalterable interdependence that binds, as facts that are social and political (especially in their repercussions), the existence and socio-political functioning of state domination and power, violence, hierarchy, inequality, suffering and necropoiesis - in their material and symbolic profiles – and how the political presence and active administration of the States reaffirms and perpetuates them daily in their harmful, pathogenic and lethal effects, whose storms pour on people's biographies and biological dynamics and in social processes in a widespread, indirect, collateral and durable way. Thus it emerges the State-entity as an industrial machine and complex of domination continuously operational, whose «its materiality resides much less in institutions than in the reworking of processes and relations of power so as to create new spaces for the deployment of power» (Trouillot 2001[12], p. 127) and whose structures (variously declined) - in which human lives are reincorporated and on which they depend – rely not only on violence and genocidal continuum, but also on death and democidal one.

II. FROM THE OVERT DIMENSION...

Rummel formulates the concept of democide starting from the examination of the "macro" dimension of mass

¹This neologism takes up his notion of anthropopoiesis by Francesco Remotti (2002 [13]) about the dynamics, processes and devices with which societies and their political and symbolic systems "produce", "manufacture" individuals and (perpetuate) the material systems in which their existence takes place and those of values and meaning that guide their relations and behaviour.

²Stefano Boni (2011) uses the term "sociopolitics" (original Italian: *sociopolitica*) to imply the structure and the form of the (often disproportionately differentiated) distribution of sociopower (original Italian: *sociopotere*) in the social body (ibid, p. 30) and their effects upon people's biographies, life conditions, subjectivities and practices. Sociopower is, in turn, the set of devices and mechanisms of social and cultural deployment of power, transversal to the different political types (ibidem), in a given socio-cultural and political circuit.

killings - whose victims are counted in the order of millions (“megamurders”) and tens of millions (“deka-megamurders”) - occurred mainly in wartime and in the context of dictatorial regimes, especially those of Twentieth Century, via ethnic cleansing, genocide and politicides³. Democide is, in Rummel’s definition, the murder of any person or people by a government, including genocide, politicicide, and mass murder and, more generally, «any actions by government:

- (1) designed to kill or cause the death of people:
 - (1.1) because of their religion, race, language, ethnicity, national origin, class, politics, speech, actions construed as opposing the government or wrecking social policy, or by virtue of their relationship to such people;
 - (1.2) in order to fulfill a quota or requisition system;
 - (1.3) in furtherance of a system of forced labor or enslavement;
 - (1.4) by massacre;
 - (1.5) through imposition of lethal living conditions;
 - (1.6) by directly targeting noncombatants during a war or violent conflict.

- (2) that cause death by virtue of an intentionally or knowingly reckless and depraved disregard for life (which constitutes practical intentionality), as in:
 - (2.1) deadly prison, concentration camp, forced labor, prisoner of war, or recruit camp conditions;
 - (2.2) killing medical or scientific experiments on humans;
 - (2.3) torture or beatings;
 - (2.4) encouraged or condoned murder, or rape, looting, and pillage during which people are killed;
 - (2.5) a famine or epidemic during which government authorities withhold aid, or knowingly act in a way to make it more deadly;
 - (2.6) forced deportations and expulsions causing deaths.

- (3) with the following qualifications and clarifications:
 - (a) “government” includes de facto governance [...] or by a rebel or warlord army over a region and population it has conquered [...];
 - (b) “actions by governments” comprise official or authoritative actions by government officials, including the police, military, or secret service; or such non-governmental actions (e.g., by brigands, press-gangs, or secret societies) receiving government approval, aid, or acceptance;
 - (c) clause 1.1 includes, for example, directly targeting noncombatants during a war or violent conflict out of hatred or revenge, or to depopulate an enemy region or terrorize or force the population into urging surrender; this would involve, among other actions, indiscriminate urban bombing or shelling, or blockades that cause mass starvation;
 - (d) “relationship to such people” (clause 1.1) includes their relatives, colleagues, co-workers, teachers, or students;
 - (e) “massacre” (clause 1.4) includes the mass killing of prisoners of war or of captured rebels;
 - (f) “quota” system (clause 1.3) includes randomly selecting people for execution in order to meet a quota; or arresting people according to a quota, some of whom are then executed;
 - (g) “requisition” system (clause 1.3) includes taking from peasants or farmers all their food and produce, leaving them to starve to death» (ibid, pp. 48-49).

The preconditions of the democidal possibility, of its conceivability and practicability are to be found fundamentally in the three «structural characteristics of maximum concentration of power, monopoly of violence and forced homogenization» (Vitale 2002, p. 32) which, in their coherent, uninterrupted, and stubborn declination and affirmation, characterize constitutively the socio-political state configuration and the processes of state-making. The other main elements that characterize the state political form, and propel its indispensable democidal vocation, are the imposition of «a strong centralized authority», the «exclusive control over a territory closed by rigid and unitary boundaries», «the presence of a bureaucracy and laws that invade the daily

³ Politicide is «the killing of people or populations by a government because of their political tendencies or for political purposes» and the intentional and premeditated murder and of people because of their political views or for political reasons (Rummel 2005, p. 41, 45).

life of the subject population», a «relationship of exclusive fidelity towards itself [...], strengthened by nationalism» and «the identification of the population with the exercise of political power» (Vitale 2005, p. XVIII notes).

The main markers of democide are the intentionality and the force of authority with which it is formulated and implemented by decision-makers and officials of the political and administrative apparatus of the States⁴, following a precise project - which «always presupposes an organization, therefore a planning» (Portinaro 2017[14], p. 17) - underlying and in deference to the (re)affirmation of its own domination. In doing so, they are often supported by the participatory consensus of civil societies set up ad hoc⁵ or rely on third and “independent” political and social entities assigned with “dirty work”, such as secessionist movements, private militias, subversive paramilitary corps and war machines (Mbembe 2003 [15]).

Regarding the latter data, studies on the emergence of social and political actors replacing the State or acting in its place show that

on the one hand [...] the state power is not as widespread, monopolistic and solid as it tries to present itself, on the other hand they have realized how the state can reaffirm its authority not only through violence and the coercive imposition of its own systems, but also - and above all - by co-opting these potentially alternative power centres. In doing so, it demonstrates a remarkable ability to adapt to the social contexts on which it aims to extend its control [...] which in many cases distances it, at least in practice, from Weber's model, making it take different forms depending on the context and making it appear as an institution that, far from being monolithic, is characterized by a certain degree of polycentricity (Gardini 2016, p. 14).

The 169,198,000 deaths (according to statistical calculations by default) caused directly by the States during the twentieth century, largely on the domestic level, represent six times the number of victims of all the wars that took place in the same period and are an irrefutable testimony of the overall history of the state political form as «uninterrupted martyrology of demos, a 'continued democide' (to establish and preserve power)», which in the twentieth century has known unprecedented proportions thanks to totalitarianism⁶ and undermines the underlying doctrines that axiomatically advocate the «benevolent nature of the State (and that under the rule of Leviathan the innocent ones have nothing to fear)» (Vitale 2005, pp. XVIII-XIX; cf. Vitale 2002).

III. ... TO THE COVERT DIMENSION

In light of the elements just reported, Rummel's statement that «power kills» (2005, p. 3) is fully legitimate and solidly motivated. The States constitute, in fact, industrial complexes of domination and massacre, which cause death at their discretion and by force of authority. Together, they place themselves in a separate and overwhelming position toward «their other» (Gardini 2016, p. 16), that is, human life and society⁷, and solipsistically assert the imperative supremacy of the demands and interests they advocate (both apparatus and elite). Democide is, with the arsenal of material and symbolic devices of violence it implies, a primary instrument for States to exercise and consolidate their sovereignty over peoples and territories (and the very assumption of the latter) and in order to fulfil the goals, in an *efficientist*⁸ way, the running of their power and that of the elites who, with their interests and their demands, preside over, administer and supervise it.

Rummel's examination of democide, however, lacks that focus on the decisive interweaving between the vast

⁴ The democide is «led by government agents, the modern state bureaucracy (instrument of the sovereign function), primary actor of democide rendered “routine business”. “Impersonal” and loyal to those in power, which rewards it by favoring, for their loyalty, the worst pictures [...]» (Vitale 2005, pp. XXII-XXIII).

⁵ This happens successfully where there is a habit of acting violence towards certain categories of subjects, as it will be seen.

⁶ Totalitarianism «more consistently has realized the modern state model of maximum concentration of the 'sovereign' territorial political power» and the «sovereignist ideology that is at the basis of its subsequent development of its premises and its work of construction of 'internal' law and order» (Vitale 2005, pp. XV-XVI)

⁷ For the State (and transversally), power is separation and «difference between itself and society» (Remotti 1993[17], p. 49), on an autocentric and suprematist basis.

⁸ I use this neologism to refer to any method, principle, and doctrine through which one searches (and obtains) the continuous progress, increase and improvement of the efficiency of certain mechanisms or machines, like State or society (thereby emphasizing the hegemonic mechanistic vision of the latter).

horizon (of matrices and effects) of necropolitics⁹ and the “living” tissue and the «productive offshoots [...] (those that, rooted in social life, in the gaps of relationships and institutions, often end up becoming invisible)» (Beneduce 2008[17], p. 11) of violence, inequality and power and their continuums promoted and (re)produced by States - both in their own territories and in external ones. What lacks is, therefore, attention to the micro dimension of their micro-physical presence as relational and socio-political elements with necropoietic evolutionary implications and their decisive role. This perspective, in fact, helps to «grasp the dynamics and the historical, economic and moral conjunctures», and not only political, «which determine their emergence and forms» (*ibidem*) and to «rationally analyse domination» (*ibid.* 12; cf. Bourdieu 1994[18]) in all of its components and its activities, which create the socio-political pre- and protodemocidal humus in which the possibilities to think and realize mass murders, persecutions and discriminations ferment.

The criterions of intentionality and planning represent the crucial epistemological limit of the original notion of democide and its consistent application to all phenomena (and responsibilities) of necropoiesis caused by States through medium- and long-term results and socio-political consequences (foreseeable and not), often not immediately attributable to them, of their perspectives and decisions. This exclusive focus on these criterions obliterates and remove, in particular, all those repercussions of death constituting the result and the reflection of the continuum of violence and genocide animated “during peacetime” by living conditions and conducts unleashed by the historically settled activity of phenomena, cycles and causal chains of enormous scope and long course, comprised within highly complex dynamics –whose matrix is, above all, both structural (Farmer 2004) and cultural (Galtung 1990)- triggered by the socio-political action (and existence) of the States¹⁰. The latter contributes to legitimising and nourishing, or at least leaving unchanged, the continuum of existing violence through whose “storms”, in the industrial complex of the domination advocated by the state structures, the (even lethal) consumption and attrition of life¹¹ are expressed and have repercussions on the subjects (in a more “indirect”, dispersed, submerged, unpredictable and peripheral way). In the ensuing tragic daily situations, the «most fundamental inequality» of the value and care of lives is considered to be ordinary and quieter and less disturbing (Fassin 2019, p. 127) constantly manifests his hangovers by starting and being conveyed by the (cold and lucidly aware of the possible effects) formulation and implementation of certain political and administrative measures, lines of action, provisions and protocols by the state apparatuses (in particular by the bureaucratic ones and their officials, who materially handle and manage the power of evaluation and action-intervention) as well as by their reception by the socio-cultural tissues.

In detail, the implementation of state political and administrative decisions (as well as necropolitics) and the absorption of their effects and perspectives by the socio-cultural tissues are combined with the lines of inequality and hierarchy (and social division) in the allocation of significant and “economic” value or *sacerty*¹² (Agamben 1995[19]) to people, to social groups and their lives - that is, in determining which lives count and deserve to be preserved (and live in decent conditions of preservation) or not. These lines found the state sovereign domination (*ibidem*) and the heterogeneous deployment of its violence in the imposition of its own political-moral coordinates of dependence, exploitation, (positive and negative) discrimination, objectification (Csordas 1990[20]) and evaluation in a necropolitical (Mbembe 2003), biopolitical and governmental (Foucault 2001[21], 2004[22]) sense. This results in the conditions and structures of differentiated and unequal opportunities of care (Fassin 2019, p. 126), treatment, protection and development of human lives, in the patterns of allocation and use of the resources and fundamental rights that accompany them and in the *habitus* (Bourdieu 2005[24]), in the prevailing logics and behaviors, within socio-economic and political-cultural structures that impose «conditions of physical-emotional pain, through precarious and risky work or

⁹ The terms “politics of death” or “necropolitics” define all those measures and political decisions that exert forms of «subjugation of life to the power of death» or *necropower* and to his action of «destruction of persons», of their body and psyche, which are reflected in the modulation and configuration for this purpose of the living conditions affecting them (Mbembe 2003, p. 40).

¹⁰ Political and socio-political processes reaffirm, reflect and combine transversally and constantly with the vigour and pre-eminence of material profiles - inequality and impossibility of access to essential goods and services and development opportunities, poverty, gratuitous - and symbolic - imaginary aggressions and representations of contempt, disregard and guilt of subjects in difficulty and subordinates; de-humanisation and racist, homophobic, sexist “cultures of terror” (Tauszig 1984[23]) - of existing discrimination and inequalities.

¹¹ These are embodied in subtle and normal - but equally harmful and causing pain, deprivation, disease, and death - offenses and injuries to life that follow less immediately (but not for this deresponsibilizing), realizing genocides that are invisible «not because they are secreted away or hidden from view, but quite the opposite» (Bourgeois, Schepers-Hughes 2004, p. 20).

¹² *Homines sacres* (sacred men) are those subjects whose life sees their significant value annulled and whose death is an equally weightless, acceptable, and negligible fact, sometimes even desirable, due and encouraged.

fomenting high rates of morbidity-mortality»¹³ (Cerbini 2013[25], p.99). These elements, overall, are to the detriment above all of those who hold disadvantaged, inferior and subordinate social positions and are (made) more vulnerable and blackmailable¹⁴.

Violence and inequality innervating domination are grafted, legitimized, and reiterated in an automated manner in the «functioning of impersonal (bureaucratic, technocratic, and automatic) systems» (Kirmayer 2004[26], p. 321). They are included in a relationship of reciprocity with the articulation and corroboration of all those behaviors and habituses which express and convey an unequivocal «indifference to life, or at least to certain lives» (Fassin 2019, p. 147) and to their voices and expressions of suffering, in line with the criteria and the devices of “conformity” (defining as deviance and disvalue), and animate and *subject* (Butler 2013[27]) with varying intensity the social, cultural and political-institutional circuits and the interactions of their members. The related coordinates of de-sensitization and de-empathization in the face of the conditions of need, suffering and disease, the offenses and the wounds that the latter suffer, with differentiated measures and intensity, are translated into the forms, in the mechanisms, devices and strategies of social cultural and anesthesia (Feldman 2002[28]). These latter minimize or silence the material and moral contents of violence, distracting and reducing sensory perception towards their consequences and their victims, then neutralizing the problems related to them and fueling the violence continuum as well as the invisible proliferation of necropoiesis and *pathopoiesis* processes. The necropoiesis, in fact, constitutes in its episodes and dynamics the material and spore-pouring output of the multiform and capillary action of those measures that Mbembe (2003) includes in the set of politics of death or necropolitics and, more upstream, the necropowers that concretize and permeate the societies. And that subordinate substantial parts of the populations to forms of social existence marked by deprivation and suffering, often equivalent to «conferring upon them the status of living dead» (ibid, p. 40).

In a concomitant way, scenarios streamed with abuse, deprivation, humiliation, tensions and conflicts, practices, and desires (often properly sadistic) of marginalisation and abandonment, of guilt, punishment, and removal (from the destructive veins) of the social categories that are its target are made tolerable (if not even encouraged) and obvious¹⁵. These elements identify the «quantitative and qualitative dissemination of objectification» which «increases the social capacity to inflict pain on the Other» and «render the Other’s pain inadmissible to public discourse and culture» (Feldman 2002, p. 406), as well as the rooting of those logics of «radical social exclusion, dehumanization, depersonalization, pseudospeciation, and reification which normalize atrocious behaviour¹⁶ and violence toward others¹⁷» (Bourgois, Scheper-Hughes 2004, p. 21), which make the latter increasingly «molecular» (Portinaro 2017, p. 183), «invisible or unknown» (Bourgois, Scheper-Hughes 2004, p. 2) as something positive and “healthy” and that fully favour the onset of proto-democidal phenomena.

It is therefore possible to understand the modalities and reasons for the perpetuation of the mechanisms, devices and habituses that implement the definition and codification of those *wasted lives* (Bauman 2004[29]) that can be attacked, abused and destroyed by virtue of their lesser importance (and their status) attributed to them in the “economy” of society, for which there is often the perception that a daily state of exception. They are *homines sacres* who can be outraged (without actual socio-legal consequences), killed or abandoned to death in socio-environmental conditions of exclusion, disregard, and negligence towards them as well as of material deprivation and of ignorance of their rights and of the possibilities of attention, listening and credibility. In addition to this, a constant state of tension, precariousness and uncertainty apply to them in seeing their lives guaranteed, protected, and cared for like others: everything all takes place within a targeted infliction regime of

¹³ Multifarious «differences in access to biomedical care lead to different morbidity and mortality rates for the same diseases in different social groups» (Nguyen, Peschard 2003[30], p. 460) in the same country and in comparison with others.

¹⁴ Here we have the full realization of the definition of exploitation as a condition of inequality in which those in a dominant and privileged position (*topdogs*) get «much more [...] out of the interaction in the structure than other, the underdogs» (Galtung 1990, p. 293), affecting social and living conditions and the structures of opportunities reserved for the latter.

¹⁵ «The mad, the differently abled, the mentally vulnerable have often fallen into this category of the unworthy living, as have the very old and infirm, the sick-poor, and, of course, the despised racial, religious, sexual, and ethnic groups of the moment» (Bourgois, Scheper-Hughes 2004, p. 21).

¹⁶ Simona Taliani wisely points out how «the use of power by subordinates» is regularly translated «into a clear abuse of power, in the reproduction of hierarchical and violent logics, in forms of domination that oppress, from within, 'the most desperate'» (2008[31], p. 407) and that show the mutual transformation of the State and society into each other and the translation of the perspectives and coordinates of sovereignty in the development and addressing of ordinary social processes.

¹⁷ Stereotypes and prejudices (focused on class, age, race and/or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) are the silent premises for affirming negative discrimination dynamics (in terms of material rights and resources, as well as symbolic), social exclusion and attribution of performance.

suffering within configurations of «social relationships whose fundamental iniquity lies precisely in a hierarchy of lives implicitly established or explicitly admitted [which] allows to belittle, stigmatize and brutalize these lives, while others are favoured» (Fassin 2019, p. 168). Furthermore, such devalued and disadvantaged lives become the emblem of evil and suffering of which they are passively assigned and aprioristically guilty of their own condition, thus showing the perverse dynamic of removal and projection of the socio-historical-political responsibility by those who hold power.

All these elements express, in summary, a systemic and (well-rounded) state violence that pours constantly, with its pathological and necropoietic effects, on human life and is translated and inscribed in the lives and conduct - collective and individual - of the subjects, in the grain, spaces and socio-cultural processes that they animate and establish and in the possibilities and (structures of) opportunities available to them to develop and lead a dignified existence, as well as to see (at the same time) their person, their identity, their presence in society and their physical and psychological integrity respected. The interconnected notions of structural and cultural violence help to emphasize in a fitting way how this is the way through which the state power becomes “person”, “society” and system and vice versa, stifling and compressing the agency of the subjects (through them) with its mechanisms of oppression, deprivation and suffering which, as sociopolitical phenomena (marked by the interaction between power and cultural devices), «affect their effects on the flesh» (Quaranta 2006[32], p. 6). The individual and collective bodies and psyches (Fanon 1961[33], Beneduce 2007[34], 2010[35]), with their expressions, their health and their suffering, constitute the ventriloquist of the social (Godelier 1996[36]) and the political, as well as the historical entities that incorporate its dynamics, the contradictions, inequalities, hidden violence and the lesser value attributed to one’s life and person (physical and legal) that animate them, somatising them with pathogenic (and lethal) modalities. Social suffering and its necrogenetic derivations result decisively «from what political, economic and institutional power does to people and, reciprocally, from how such forms of power can themselves influence responses to social problems»¹⁸ (Kleinman, Das, Lock 1997[37], p. IX). They also testify «the pathogenic - and necropoietic - role of human action, social orders, cultural meanings» (*ibidem*) within the framework of state domination, thus reconfirming the impact of political and social relationships and ecosystems in structuring and directing the inner and collective lives of people (Hayes 1998[38], p. 42).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The notion of democide, re-read and expanded by comparison with the studies and reflections coming from anthropology, proves to be a perfect epistemological-conceptual tool as container and point of synthesis and reference to understand, and study specifically, the phenomenology and genealogy of the many existing and arising processes of necropoiesis (and pathopoiesis). It is also effective in demonstrating the transversal and constantly central role of the States as a leading-actor and common denominator in the activity and existence of States in the generation (and exploitation) of the conditions and situations of their triggering and, intertwining with anthropological reflection, to make the power and those who hold it and exercise accountable.

In light of the many aspects involved and their ethnographic and conceptual value, there emerges the need for a focus of research and reflection specifically dedicated to the multiple issues that dot the issues and events of death production. At the same time, there is a need to inaugurate further critical strands in the examination of state policies in the anthropological (and academic) fields. The use of a term deriving from political science implies the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach aimed at recognizing and describing the socio-political role of state necropoiesis, as well as its phenomenal complexity, composition and definition and the plurality of matrices, responsibilities and dynamics that feed their presence and effectiveness in space and time. In this work, the integration of an analysis inspired by «an ethnography that 'penetrates the corridors of power'» and «an ethno-political domination and suffering that can show its secret architects and the logic of its reproduction» is crucial. (Beneduce 2008, p. 12).

Violence and genocidal continuum, around which the existence of state political forms orbits (in a variously declined way), can be reworked and renamed, in the light of its effects and lethal implications, *death and democidal (and sacerty) continuum*. As a result, the term democide refers to the state production of death (and suffering) as a result not (any longer) only of strategic intentionality and direct action taken in particular situations to achieve certain political objectives, but also of the regularity of conditions and of the material and symbolic possibilities of life (marked by deprivation, discrimination, humiliation, trauma and violations of their

¹⁸«Included under the category of social suffering are conditions that are usually divided among separate fields, conditions that simultaneously involve health, welfare, legal, moral and religious issues» (Kleinman, Das, Lock 1997, p. IX).

own integrity and personal dignity) that the actions and prospects of the States entail and produce in the medium-long term, especially via necropolitics¹⁹. This allows to illustrate and explain more richly the set of processes that they trigger and structure, whose mortifying²⁰ emissions (with their constant “waves” and their effects - contextually and temporally - prolonged) involve daily and painfully, with more indirect and widespread violence, the lives of the subjects, while, by promoting their disqualification and repression of critical voices of suffering, they simultaneously open the field to programming, endorsing and realizing the direct and explicit violence of persecutions, terrorism and bloodbaths²¹.

The further, twofold result emerging from the analysis conducted here is that democide is therefore characterized by (at least) two gradations, proving to be a precondition and an inevitable and genetic emission of the existence of States as institutional and socio-political structures materially based on the founding sovereignty of their domination over and (inscribed) in human life. The latter, in the material (and materialistic) perspective of domination, is considered and perceived as an object and a resource to be arbitrarily, conditionally, and unequally assigned value and meaning and to be profitably disposable. This sovereign domain ultimately distributes, markedly and disproportionately differentiated and dispersed, the harmful and potentially lethal and necrogenic effects of oppression, deprivation, exploitation and suffering within society and constitutively causes death.

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¹⁹ Necropolitics are the primary component of democide and are also both a strategy and a political tool (as in the original meaning of Rummel), generator and result of preconditions and extensive effects (for duration and radius) described so far. Necropolitics and democide, furthermore, can be a key element in the political management (and governance) of state and specific governments and a key goal to be achieved radically.

²⁰ This term is used to mean the processes that (re)produce humiliation, suffering and psychological, physical and social pathogenesis in individuals and communities with harmful outcomes, as well as literally those processes of literal direct death production by the state apparatus (and their long-term consequences).

²¹ This allows a deeper exploration of «spaces of violence locally» and to understand, «to shed light upon how and why the brutality produced by the powerful at the international and national level is reproduced and shaped locally by some people toward each other in their daily lives» (Green 2004[39], p. 320).

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