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**SUMMARY OF THE
PhD DISSERTATION**

**Discourses of power
in modern political philosophy and the age of globalization**

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SUMMARY

Keywords: *power, politics, political philosophy, state, republican community, sovereignty, social contract, separation of powers, neutral power, right to resist the law, federal democracy, cosmopolitanism, globalisation, post-sovereignty, transnationalisation of the public sphere, right to have rights, extra-constitutional power of the people, law of peoples, global justice, responsibility*

In my thesis, I have started from the *premise* that the problem of power is related to the question of the nature of politics, the functioning of community existence, social cohesion or the dynamics of social conflict, and in general to the broader context of human political condition. The primary *objective* of this thesis is to develop some concept of the constellations of power at work in the contemporary world, of the shifts that can be observed in the way power operates today. If we are to set ourselves this task, we must first clarify what we mean by the concept of power.

It is from this premise that I have developed the *structure* of this paper, which is divided into three main sections. In the first part of my thesis, I briefly introduce some 20th century definitions of power, from classical sociological theories to contemporary social scientific and critical theories. In order to avoid that this conceptual diversity leads to an eclectic understanding, I will try to analyse the theories presented from the point of view of how collectively obligatory decisions are conceived by each author. In this context, I will also try to map out the attempts to typologise concepts of power and their logic.

In the second part of my thesis, which is a history of ideas, I will examine how the logic of command and obedience was replaced by the concept of sovereignty in the early stages of modernity. In this section, I will outline the main stages in the development of the concept of the abstract state, the major aspects of classical theories of sovereignty, and the aporias along which the theoretical horizon that characterises the decision-making mechanisms of the so-called "Westphalian" world order has developed. I will then attempt to briefly outline the relevant aspects of liberal and federalist theories of power and to shed light on the origins and motivations that may explain the logic of these theories as distinct from that of the major powers. From this point of view, the way in which each theory of power conceives of the issues of sovereignty and separation of powers, rights and duties, society and freedom, is a very important aspect of analysis, since these are the key elements that form the legitimating basis of each theory of power.

In the third part of the thesis, I will therefore analyse contemporary processes, inquiring the relationship between globalisation and sovereignty, all the while seeking answers to the question of what the dispersion of state sovereignty means in today's global world, what concepts can be used to capture its transformation, and what new formations of power are emerging in the transnationalising networks of social relations. In analysing contemporary processes, I will try to outline the different methodologies of thinking about globalising power and their stakes, in which different assumptions of the integration or disintegration of the social system come into play.

The *methodology* I use to study power is both "archaeological" and critical. In contrast to the history of ideas, which considers to be the historical analysis of ideas understood as opinions, errors and mentalities, concerned with their origin, continuity and totalisation, and whose main characteristic is that it anticipates the coherence of the object of its analysis, the Foucauldian concept of archaeology is directed towards the regularities of discourse, the practices that determine it. In doing so, it does not seek to eliminate the historical dynamics of discursive practices, but rather to focus on their ramifications and complex interplay, without losing sight of their historicity. That is, in contrast to the traditional history of ideas, which transforms the contradictions of political thought into a general, abstract principle of interpretation, Foucault's "archaeology" explores the various spaces of disagreement. Alongside the method of the history of ideas and the archaeology, my thesis seeks to assert a critical attitude in the Foucauldian sense, in which I attempt to reveal the way in which certain concepts of power theory function within a given philosophical system, to show the extent to which they depend on the context of their use and the normative goals they aim to achieve, the extent to which their scope is influenced by the way in which they interpret the relations from which they derive, and the often conflicting ways in which their subsequent use and recontextualisation can take place. This interpretation of the critical stance obviously does not mean that I am going to explore the issues raised by Foucault, or that I am going to break at all costs with the methodology he called the legal analysis of power. Indeed, it is by no means a coincidence that the legal aspect has accompanied the history of thinking about power throughout modernity, and I therefore consider its study to be inescapable, which does not mean that contemporary analyses of power do not raise relevant aspects from other fields that have heuristic value in the study of the phenomenon.

In the first part of my thesis, which deals with definitions of power, I present theories (Weber, Dahl, Bachrach and Baratz, Lukes, Parsons, Dahrendorf, Poulantzas, Beetham, Clegg, Barnett and Duvall) that attempt to capture power in terms of its sources, its effects or its mode of operation. These definitions understand power as the possession of legitimate power, the right to use power or simply to make decisions, the assertion of one's own will or influence, the influencing or limiting of others' choices, the development of various control mechanisms, the assertion of group interests, the production of effects that determine self-understanding, etc. However, the various interpretations differ widely as to whether the phenomenon should be seen as a unidirectional causal process, a bidirectional back-and-forth movement or a multilevel process flowing through society, and whether the essence of the process should be found in the restriction or, on the contrary, in the production of social relations. The definitions of power that have been presented do not give us a clear picture of how to formulate the question of power, from which perspective it is relevant to ask: whether it is more relevant to consider what it means to exercise power or, on the contrary, what it means for people to be subject to power, or perhaps what conditions must be met for someone(s) to exercise power and others to obey. The overwhelming majority of the concepts presented are sufficiently sophisticated to avoid the error of one-way causality or of substitution as mere power, even if not all approaches give equal attention to the political dimensions of power, questions of legitimacy or problems of institutionalisation. At the

same time, it can be observed that the theories of power presented here contain a number of incompatible aspects concerning the sources of power, the ways in which it is exercised, and the aspects of its analysis and classifiability. If we look carefully at what the definitions of power are based on and what they consider to be the essence of power, we obtain the following conceptual grid: domination, power, influence, decision-making, persuasion, participation, supervision, control, conflict, etc. However, these often reduce the complexity of the concept, which is why there is a need to analyse the phenomenon in its multifaceted nature and with due regard for the dynamism of social processes.

In contrast to the definitions of power in the social sciences, I have attempted to create a political-philosophical definition of power, highlighting two philosophical definitions of power, namely the theories of power developed by Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault. Arendt argues that power denotes a human capacity whose essence lies in cooperating with others and acting in concert with them. Power is not possessed by a single person or group, as it exists only as long as the group acts collectively. In fact, having power means that one has the authority to act on behalf of others, but this is not a permanent state of being, but only lasts for the duration of the authority. Collective human action is, in Arendt's conception, the par excellence arena of humans capacity to create the world, and it is decisive for politics because it is the only capacity that presupposes a plurality of people, i.e. it cannot be reduced to the lonely, isolated individual. Michel Foucault's theory is intended to depart from the mainstream of political theories of power in that it seeks to develop a non-consensual conception of power. As he stresses, power does not mean the renunciation of freedom, the transfer of rights, the representation of the power of the masses by the few, since the power relationship is not by its very nature the expression of a consensus. For Foucault, power is an asymmetrical relation, but at the same time a mobile, dynamic relation: it is best described in terms of strategy. At the heart of the power relation, Foucault argues, lies the opposition of the will and the intransigence of freedom. This emancipatory conception of power can best be reflected in the emphasis on the agonistic character of power, and this is the point that distinguishes Foucault's theory from other theories of power based on the principle of causality: it is precisely because of its conflictual character that power becomes a feature of social dynamics that can never be definitively appropriated. At first sight, these two conceptions of power seem irreconcilable, since they come from different intellectual traditions and are embedded in different social theoretical structures. Yet I juxtapose them because I believe that they are both based on a conception of politics which, even if in different language, seeks to free politics from a conception that reduces it to a mere domination, and instead to a search for the possibility of coexistence, which therefore always takes place in a space between equals. Politics, to borrow Jacques Rancière's expression, takes place in a space of radical equality, and political activity has no specific object and, being the emergence of equality, it reveals historically changing conditions. At the same time, the "essence" of politics is not compromise but dissent, which means that in the course of political activity something always becomes perceptible that was not only previously incomprehensible or imperceptible but also did not exist in political terms, that is, was not part of a common thinking about the common. In this conception, political action has neither a pre-

existing, context-independent object nor a pre-conceived subject: there is no characteristic field of politics that is the same in every age, nor are there social groups, classes or agents that always appear in the political scene in an unchanging form. In my thesis, I have always taken this concept of politics as relevant, basing my normative statements on this concept of politics.

A sketch of the relevant definitions has shown that in the 20th century, concepts of power have appeared primarily (though not exclusively) in social scientific discourse (from sociology to political science, from behaviourist theories to action theories). The philosophical definitions of power that I have cited can be said, at first sight, to fit broadly into the conceptual framework of one or other strand of power theory (between system-integrating and conflictual conceptions), but, since their approach is not so much descriptive as normative, they are articulated in a different way. If we want to look more closely at what the concept means in a narrow sense for political philosophy (if the concept has such a specific meaning at all), we must first trace the ways in which the problem of power has been articulated in the history of philosophy.

In the *second* part of the thesis, entitled *A possible sketch of modern philosophical conceptions of power*, I wanted to show, in the course of an analysis of the history of ideas and concepts, how these modern concepts were formed, in what context they were formulated, what positions they polemicized with, what role they played in the political theoretical system of their authors. An understanding of the fact that these concepts are not atemporal, that they were born in specific historical situations and circumstances, may also show that their use today cannot be taken for granted, if only because the polemical element they contain often bears the marks of social conditions that are now outdated. The above methodological observation does not mean that these concepts no longer have any meaning for us, if only because a large part of them is still part of political reality and thinking about politics, but that we need to understand the "semantic struggles" of the past, which primarily concerned the definition and assertion of political and social positions, in the context of contemporary theoretical and political struggles in order to differentiate our current concepts later on.

In the early modern era, the emergence of the theory of sovereign power was closely linked to the rationalism that emerged from the late medieval and humanist rediscovery of antiquity, and subsequently to the epistemology that emerged from the systematic Cartesian doubt. If we conceive of politics as a shared system of action in which the respective conceptions of the human-social world, its knowability and governability, play a constitutive role, we can by no means treat as neutral the epistemological considerations closely related to the conceptions of power theory.

Jean Bodin's conception does not yet break with the tradition of a transcendent principle that provides the basis for obedience to the sovereign from outside political action, which grants absolute rights to this transcendent instance through a posterior feedback. The legal basis of this system is, paradoxically, the inherent privation of rights, which leads to the fact that the will of the sovereign, who possesses the powers of *summa potestas*, is sufficient to legislate without the consent of his subjects.

For its part, the concept of sovereignty, with its Hobbesian contractualist foundation, does not take account of the fact that the transfer of individual power, or the renunciation of it,

presupposes the prior existence of a community spirit on the one hand, and the visibility of the common good, the public interest as an objective, on the other, which, even before the contract, should bind together into a collective body capable of taking decisions those people who, according to the hypothesis, live in a "state of nature", i.e. in isolation, as enemies of each other, or at least in mutual independence.

Theories of popular sovereignty, driven by the desire to limit executive power by the people, treat "the people" as an unproblematic borderline concept capable of bridging the gap between individual wills and collective will, offering an explanation for the paradoxical process of transformation from member of the people to citizen of the state. At the same time, it can be said that the classical theories of popular sovereignty attached to the concept of the people naïve cognitive notions which, on the basis of the universal category of common sense, presented the definition of the ideal form of political organisation as a given, as the common ground of the cognitive faculty of humanity, as the result of natural law.

An examination of theories of sovereignty has shown that concepts born out of the need to immanently ground the political sphere still do not necessarily use the concepts of body, person, people, and rationality in a political sense. However, it should be stressed that medieval theological concepts were often derived from Roman law and were originally used in a political context, notably to define the jurisdiction of the princeps or emperor. In one of her essays, Hannah Arendt discusses how, following the fall of the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church took over its political role and ensured that Roman political concepts survived in the guise of theology. Arendt interprets the process of the history of ideas in which the Church perpetuated Roman political concepts, while maintaining the duality of church and state, the separation of authority and power, as a loss of the importance of politics in the Roman period, of its ability to ensure the permanence and continuity of its concepts, of the handing down of the founding of the city.

Liberal theories introduced into political philosophy the idea of the separation of powers, which actually challenged the principle of sovereignty and sought to create an alternative to it. It also entailed a change in individualism, the most important aspect of which was the definition of the private sphere as a sphere of freedoms that could not be violated by any interference by the authorities. The corollary of this was ultimately the idea of mistrust of power, which very often led to a simplistic interpretation of power.

The idea of a separation of powers (legislative, executive and the so-called federal, i.e. foreign policy power) appears in John Locke, but it is not in this division that the limitation of power is to be found. To counter the danger that a government endowed with sovereignty might abuse its power, i.e. that it might fail to act in a manner consistent with the confidence placed in it, Locke seeks a means of limiting it by turning to the people as the depositary of the right of resistance, as enshrined in natural law, and by means of positive rights, i.e. the instruments of permanent law. In Locke's social theory, there is a contradiction, an oscillation or a dichotomy concerning the origin, status and operation of power: on the one hand, it is to be found in the idea, tending towards the idea of sovereignty, that the legislative power as supreme authority is sacred and inviolable, which derives from his deep religious embeddedness and his attachment to natural

law, that is, his conviction that natural law is an expression of divine law, social law is a direct extension of natural law, and in no way constitutes a break with it; on the other hand, on the other hand, legislative power for him also functions as a procedural concept, which does not denote the eternal moral values of the citizens, but the representation of the temporary, because ever-changing, interests of the majority (the *valentior pars*).

Montesquieu was able to free himself from Locke's absolutist language because he was able to place liberty on a very different footing from that previously offered by theories of the state of nature and of sovereignty inseparable from it. At the heart of Montesquieu's theory of power, therefore, is the elaboration of a theory of free institutions, commonly referred to in public law thought as the principle of separation of powers or division of the branches of power. However, in a narrower reading, Montesquieu's theory is a little more articulated and complex than that which can be reduced to the idea of the mutual control of the different branches of power, i.e. the idea that power can only be limited by power. In *The Spirit of Laws*, it is not really a matter of a strict separation of powers, but rather of the interaction of the different powers, which is more aptly called the moderation of powers. The essence of this is that Montesquieu formulates the principle of the plurality of powers, which is that there is no single sovereign power that should have all the powers of decision and action in order to achieve social cohesion. At first sight, the principle of the separation of powers means that each agent has a distinct capacity to influence the other, and that there is no such thing as what is commonly called power (*pouvoir*), but only separate and distinct powers (*puissances*). For Montesquieu, then, politics is the calculation of the interests of all identifiable social groups, the determination of the compatibilities between them, and the balancing of the forces acting in society. The main instrument of this balancing is undoubtedly the good law, which can even be capable of changing the morals of a people. At the same time, the masterpiece of lawmaking is the creation of a state of public order in which political powers are repressed, leaving room for the free activity of the people.

Benjamin Constant, for his part, is also in dispute with the Montesquieu principle of separation of powers, or rather, he wants to adapt it: his main objection is that it is not enough to ensure a constitutional balancing of the various powers, because they are not generally concerned with observing and controlling each other, but rather with concentrating power, and that an external principle should be introduced to limit them, namely that no power should be allowed to do violence to the rights of the people. Constant's basic position is that the cavalcade of special interests in a republic must not be suppressed by any one supreme power, whatever principle it may act in the name of, for it can only result in the substitution of arbitrariness for law. From this point of view, he formulates the principle, in terms of the technique of power, that force should not be opposed to force, which can paralyse the exercise of power, but rather that the institution of a neutral power should be developed.

Theories of federalism, for their part, show that the liberal principles of separation of powers and distrust of power themselves presuppose some unified concept of power. The Latin word *foedus* means convention, agreement, association, alliance, and the political ideal of federalism derived from it is based on the central idea that power never comes from a single source,

and hence that the organisation of the exercise of power cannot be built around a single centre. In the federalist conception, therefore, governance is divorced from the problem of power, or more precisely, it does not even raise the possibility of a sovereignty-type concentration of power: the precise delimitation of the limits of state jurisdiction merely defines the contours and limits of the activities of federal bodies. The important assumptions of this concept of power theory are that society itself is plural and that the abuse of power can fundamentally come from multiple sources. The assumption that the same type of power can be exercised at several levels presupposes a multiplicity of persons capable of exercising power, and the designation of the scope of competences does not serve to fix power, but merely to intervene to prevent conflicts of jurisdiction, limited to the recognition and sanctioning of overstepping the sphere of action as a violation of the constitution. What is more, the idea of the division of competences is important in federalist theories not only because of the acceptance of the principle of plurality, but also because it keeps the question of constitutionality "on the agenda", in so far as it is constantly presented as something to be added to and shaped.

In *The Federalist Papers*, Madison does not merely consider the practical aspects of the exercise of power when he argues that the governance of a country of large size and population cannot be achieved by the methods of direct democracy. But that is obviously not all he is saying, since, as I mentioned, he also argues that it is inadvisable to appeal to the people on constitutional issues, because public opinion cannot be articulated anyway, and such a measure will only lead to a deepening crisis of confidence in the government. The republicanism envisaged by the founding fathers is thus opposed to the idea that politics is an art based on negotiation and compromise. The republic Madison envisaged is precisely the way to eliminate this form of negotiation, replacing it with the inevitable confrontation of particular interests, with the result that only those measures that serve the general interest will ultimately be included in state laws. Hannah Arendt was probably right when she argued that for the American Revolution and the Founding Fathers, the main issue was not how to limit power, but how to create, that is, how to set up a workable government. The decisive change in this respect was the transformation of the constitution into the source of law, and thus the place of legality was not in a subjective state of consciousness, in a will, but in a written document, which, moreover, did not attempt to take final form, but was designed to incorporate the principles of changeability and modifiability.

The dilemmas of Alexis de Tocqueville's theory of power are mainly situated in the conceptual framework of individualism and the community spirit, and of particularism represented by the Member States and the unity represented by the federal union. For Tocqueville, the question of federalism refers to the dilemma between democratic power from below and the authority that ensures the coherence of the system and the cohesion of the community in the broad sense, in other words, between the autonomy of the Member States and the coercive power of the Union. Tocqueville tries to identify the central American government with an intermediate concept, which he calls "incomplete" or "incomplete national government" (*gouvernement national incomplet*). Tocqueville's conception of the federal system is not so much the legal expression of an unitary state as a dual structure in the form of a political federation, whose purpose is to maintain the

separate existence of its members in a permanent way. For him, therefore, it is important to distinguish between state government and federal government in terms of the exercise of power and the control of power, which he sought to reinforce by distinguishing between two concepts of sovereignty, natural and fictitious. Tocqueville, while affirming that the federal system offers a previously unknown possibility of achieving prosperity and freedom, is curiously no longer confident that it will be able to cope with the power and organisation of centralised governments in the event of external conflict. In other words, although it has made great theoretical efforts to overcome the conceptual contradiction between democratic self-organisation and the state as an entity with imperative jurisdiction, it has not been able to completely free itself from the idea of power in terms of sovereignty.

Immanuel Kant declared the necessity of federalism in international relations, since this was the only means by which he saw the realisation of the "supreme political good", i.e. the ideal of eternal peace. For Kant, the creation of human association is also the creation of law, which he conceives of in terms of freedom rather than in terms of the ends to be achieved by association. The Kantian paradox of civil association is thus that freedom is founded on necessity itself. Kant believes that if it was possible to establish legal states among men, it must surely be possible to do the same among states, by first establishing the *a priori* principles on which such a system can be built and then gradually putting them into practice. The principle of perpetual peace in international relations must be applied in such a way that the international law which makes peace possible rests on the federalism of free states, i.e. the members of the federation must necessarily remain separate, independent states: Kant openly rejects the idea of a power which would grow into a universal monarchy. Kant's system is generally conceived of as an architectural structure, the essence of which is the progressive superimposition of different levels, and the solidity of which lies in the foundations on which it is built, namely the principles of the republic. In my opinion, Kant's picture is a little more nuanced than this: it is not the case that, once a republican constitution is established, it is possible to move on to the level of relations between peoples, and then, if a structure with a reassuring static structure can be put together, the order of cosmopolitan law can follow as a dome ornament, which will, in retrospect, reorganise the whole structure. In other words, from the point of view of the constitution of the state, in normative terms, this means that the constitution must be (prospectively) designed in such a way that it must take into account, in particular, the external affairs of the state and, I would venture, the possibility of cosmopolitan law itself. Kant also had a systematic aim in introducing cosmopolitan law, which means that he also wanted to codify international relations in such a way that the rules to be established in them would be a moral imperative. However, Kant also recognised the difficulties of establishing the ethical foundations of the question, and therefore sought instead to develop the foundations for the legal codification of the question. Universal civil law was therefore, in his view, limited to the conditions of *hospitality* (the right to visit), i.e. the right of a stranger to enter another's land without being treated as a hostile person. In my interpretation, Kant was trying to preserve the principle of autonomy with this cautious, minimalist thesis, even if the subject of international law is considered a citizen, but also if he is considered a people. On the one hand, it also sought to

guarantee the right of the individual not to be treated with hostility wherever he or she may be on the face of the earth, while at the same time upholding the right of collective subjects to set the rules of the game for their membership, as long as they do not thereby violate the minimum conditions necessary for the survival of others. Eternal peace was conceived by Kant as a normative task, the essence of which lies in the constant striving towards it, that is to say, as a series of efforts to extend the state of public law to the international arena: the possibility of enforcing eternal peace was therefore conceived as a historical, dynamic process.

In the third part of the thesis, entitled *Theories of power in the Age of Globalisation*, I tried to examine the theories of power in the global age. In order to understand the contemporary context, I have tried to define the concept of globalisation as a complex social process whereby areas that were previously separate entities are now increasingly interconnected and forming a unifying network in terms of economics, technology, communication and perhaps even culture. The growing interdependence and interdependence between different societies and civil groupings is reinforcing their growing interdependence and interdependence, which is also leading to an acceleration in their social awareness and, at the same time, to an increase in their social rejection. From the point of view of the theory of power, the process of globalisation raises the question of a global society organised above the level of nation-states, which is usually contrasted with the power vision of a Westphalian world order in the relevant theories. These theories essentially seek to answer the question of whether the ideal of self-determination, originally linked to a territorially organised demos, can be reconsidered at the level of organisation beyond the national framework. These theories have generally argued that globalisation has led to the eclipse of the state and the transfer of its powers to supranational organisations. Such organisations and institutions, whether hybrid, i.e. a mix of public and private sectors, or wholly private, are ultimately designed to monitor human rights and ensure the conditions for the free flow of capital. In the third part of my thesis, I will examine whether political philosophy has a new perspective or a new set of concepts that can account for the power-theoretical aspects of contemporary global processes.

In the first subsection of part three, I first examine the challenges to the idea of the state and sovereignty in the age of globalisation, and then I show the possibilities for reconstituting political subjectivation as the legitimating basis of the political community. Lastly, I will describe the proposals for laying down a normative basis for an institutional framework for cosmopolitanism that takes account not only of the idea of positive rights but also of issues of justice.

According to Jürgen Habermas, these developments in globalisation have upset the fragile balance between freedom and equality within the framework of the welfare state. Habermas describes the loss-making order of the territorial state as a historical misunderstanding, because, in his view, the organisation and operation of power within the state framework was based on flawed assumptions. The territorial organisation of sovereignty placed social solidarity within well-defined limits, within which the state-making people could become the subject of self-determination. At the same time, democratic self-determination presupposes a cultural integration which, through the development of the institutions of civic publicity, has created a new form of

collectivity, which we call the nation. Habermas developed a concept of communicative global power, a possible principle of post-national democracy, in which social solidarity is essentially justified by deliberately worked out compliance with abstract principles of justice, as opposed to leftist concepts of the central distributive role of the state, in contrast to the power of the territorial state. The construction of a new type of collective identity would be based on the practice of shaping opinion and will, elaborated from the public sphere at European level. He sees the latter not in a pre-political community of fate, but in an emancipated, normative self-understanding based on a community of rights. In contrast to democratic politics within the framework of the nation-state, whose decision-making procedures and system of representation are, in his view, still tied to the formation of sovereign will, communicative, deliberative decision-making processes impose procedural requirements whose decentralised character derives from the fact that they do not rely on any prior, metaphysical presuppositions, but only on the validity of intersubjectively recognised norms. In relation to Habermas's theory, I ask whether contemporary practices of power have transcended the situation captured by the notion of sovereignty as the absolute supremacy of power, as the absence of a relation to the foundations, as the position of domination above the law. Are we witnessing a complete transformation, or even the disappearance, of power relations in the global age? And if we assume that, with globalisation, we are in fact witnessing the emergence of a power of the multitude that has become internationalised and networked, has this new formation of power succeeded in bringing to an end the era that we had previously captured with the concept of sovereignty? What is the changing basis of legitimacy of international organisations? Can the human being as a member of a supranational civil society become the new basis of legitimacy, and can the principle of self-determination be rethought on this basis? An examination of modern theories of power has led us to the conclusion that in modernity the democratic legitimation of the nation-state implied the idea of political duty, which was seen as a factor ensuring the cohesion of social relations. Habermas's conception of post-national democracy, on the other hand, essentially assumes that power must become a distinct, specific subsystem in order for individuals to have access to decentralised decision-making.

Another feature of today's discourse on power is the emergence of a number of new issues in the political battles that could not previously have been on the agenda of debates on social inclusion. In recent times, when the unity of the demos underpinning the single framework of power and ensuring political integration has been replaced by the pluralisation of identity, new identity politics have emerged which, instead of the idea of the recognition of Kantian dignity, consider respect for different identities as a constitutive principle of politics. In other words, identity has also become plural in contemporary plural societies, and this multiplication is generated by processes that simultaneously thematize aspects of social differentiation with different origins and outcomes. The multiplication and pluralisation of political subjectivation is due to the multiplication of the factors that determine public opinion, the pluralisation and transnationalisation of the media that shape opinion, and the transformation of the quality of the public sphere. In her wide-ranging study of the contemporary legitimacy and effectiveness of the public sphere, Nancy Fraser, in her critique of the Habermasian thesis on the emergence of a

democratic mode of social identity, argues that the issue needs to be reinterpreted in the post-Westphalian context. Fraser emphasises the normative role of the public sphere for democratic theory by arguing that the concept of the public sphere in political theory goes beyond the need to understand communicative processes, as its fundamental stake is to understand how public opinion is created through communicative processes. In contrast to sceptics who blame the current fragmentation, even chaos, of the communicative space for the failure of democratic aspirations at the global level, he argues that we should not be in a hurry to reject the notion of a transnational public sphere. Fraser argues that the Habermasian theory of the emergence of a classical civic public sphere that provided an unified framework for the formation of democratic will rested on assumptions that took for granted the Westphalian-type framework of political space. Fraser, too, sees the public sphere as no longer coinciding with the totality of the people within the nation-state, which could formalise its common interest as a general will. The correspondence between the categories of citizenship, nationality and territory is confronted with phenomena such as migration, diaspora, the problems raised by dual and triple citizenship, the marginalisation of indigenous communities, or even practices of multiracialism. On the basis of these processes, Fraser considers that, although today's communication takes place at a global level, which could even give rise to transnational communities of risk, experience shows that homogenisation in the communicative field is far from being reflected in new forms of solidarity or even identities. In order for such communities to emerge, Fraser argues that two basic conditions must be met: public opinion must have normative legitimacy and at the same time meet criteria of political effectiveness. In my view, Fraser, while providing a convincing account of how transnational publics operate, does not offer a theoretical answer to how he envisages the creation of transnational publics or what practices of accountability might be associated with them.

There is, however, an idea that hopes that the vertical division of sovereignty will provide the normative basis for the principles of horizontal, or territorial, division, and that the principles of creating and changing the status quo can be developed along these lines. The conception of institutional cosmopolitanism proposed by Thomas W. Pogge broadens the scope of those who share responsibility for deprivations or abuses suffered by others in the global space, but does not seek to place the responsibility for changing injustices on individuals. He sees the responsibility he proposes for institutional reform as a positive duty, and contrasts it with the negative duty to prohibit individual abuses. He argues that as participants in socially constructed practices, people have not only a negative duty not to cooperate in the imposition of unjust practices, but also a positive duty to promote reasonably feasible reforms of the system that will help ensure respect for human rights at the global level. The problem of distributive justice, as articulated by institutional cosmopolitanism, therefore does not relate to the distribution of resources, but rather to the establishment of ground rules governing cooperation and exchange, which regulate ownership, cooperation and exchange, and thereby determine production and distribution. While Pogge's institutional cosmopolitanism promises more governance at the global level, he does not argue for full global centralisation, but on the contrary, for an increasing role for decision-making forums that are multiplied as a result of vertical division. The fact of international interdependence,

as Pogge understands it, calls for the democratic centralisation of decision-making: the fact that more and more people have a significant influence on certain institutions means that more and more people will have the political right to shape them. From this Pogge concludes that the power to take decisions should be transferred to the democratic mechanisms of organisational units that are as small as possible, but which can still accommodate as equal partners all citizens who are significantly affected by these decisions. Vertical sharing of sovereignty could be achieved by broadening the democratic nature of decision-making and by shifting decision-making competences upwards or downwards. Pogge's conception seeks to offer an alternative to both individualist and communitarian versions of cosmopolitanism. The institutional conception sees territorial units themselves as functionally organised by fixing and flexibilising procedures for association and exclusion, while at the same time offering individuals sufficient mobility to organise themselves politically.

Following the discussion of issues related to the sharing of sovereignty, the second block of the third part of the thesis deals with changes in political subjectivation. The first problem is the notion of the right to have rights, which Arendt conceived in reflecting on the legal status of political refugees and stateless persons between the two world wars, and which he sought to draw attention to the situation in which millions of people were now deprived of their right to action and expression. For more than half a century now, Arendt's questioning has prompted political philosophy to reassess the problem of political inclusion. Reflecting on the question of the right to have rights, Seyla Benhabib argues that the Kantian justification of universal citizenship is not in fact linked to the sphericity of the earth and the necessity of cooperation, but derives from the right to humanity and freedom. Benhabib is trying to move away from the Kantian and Arendtian conceptions which claim the recognition of hospitality, or the right of temporary residence, as a universal moral obligation, while at the same time leaving its transformation into permanent membership to the sovereignty. According to Benhabib, the paradox of democratic self-determination lies in the fact that only the collective will of demarcated political communities can guarantee the right to have rights, while at the same time these communities create their own systems of exclusion. Benhabib's question, then, is how to conceive of cosmopolitan norms in such a way that the right to have rights is no longer linked to the question of citizenship. His concept of cosmopolitanism, which posits the possibility of "dialogical universalism", attempts to think through the dilemma of how to create legally binding obligations through voluntary commitments in the absence of a supreme sovereign power with the right to enforce them. In the process of developing cosmopolitan norms, Benhabib argues, the state both loses and gains authority. Benhabib attempts to elaborate an analytical and normative framework of new criteria for political citizenship, or membership, and new forms of political action and subjectivation, which he seeks to achieve by introducing the concepts of democratic iterations and rights-generative politics, through which he conceptualises the grassroots construction of cosmopolitan norms. Benhabib argues that democratic arrangements and human rights need to be periodically questioned and revised, in other words, they need to be seen in the current context of globalisation. The conclusion

of her egalitarian argument is that the democratically constituted *demos* can change its self-definition by changing the criteria for joining the association.

The notion of a globally inclusive community, however, remains an idealistic vision, which is not only not made possible by the different cultural specificities of different communities, but also by different views of what a political community is. Some interpreters argue that only the individual expression of the demand for equality of rights can break the communal logic of the postulate of the sovereign people, while others argue that human rights are empty candidates in themselves unless they are backed by a community that can guarantee their enforceability and enforceability. Both theses may raise the doubt that it is not necessarily productive to ask whether the individual can be the legitimating basis of community power, i.e. whether subjective rights, by their very universality, can be the legitimating basis of community power. Jacques Rancière's thesis is that the individual and the citizen become political subjects by constantly demarcating the boundary between political life and private life. From this point of view, freedom and equality are not predicates belonging to specific subjects, but open predicates. This openness refers to the continuous choice by which actors try to determine where the boundary between the political sphere and the private sphere lies. Rancière uses the example of the French revolutionary Olympe de Gouges to show that, although the guillotine brought women political equality with men, this right acquired real political meaning when it was extended to the question of equality as such, which in turn implied the possibility of participation in political life. In contrast to the interpretation that identifies the subject of human rights with people deprived of all rights, Rancière introduces the concept of dissensus, by which he does not mean a clash of interests, opinions or values, but a debate about what can be considered a given, that is, a questioning of the framework within which a given set of facts can be considered a given. In order to put the principle of *quod omnes tangit* into practice, people must first get into the circle of *omnes*: and politics is about this Machiavellian struggle to get in. This struggle, in fact, is the practice of democracy itself, in the sense of the confrontation of the various social forces which are themselves the result of this confrontation, since they have no definable identity prior to such struggles.

For Étienne Balibar, the novelty of the Arendtian concept of the right to have rights lies precisely in the questioning of a purely legalistic conception of law. According to Balibar, the thesis of the right to have rights reveals in the origin of political institutions a moment of indeterminate anarchy that must be incessantly activated in order for institutions to function in a truly political way. In other words, democratic institutions can only maintain an equal distance from both domination and subordination to domination (i.e. function in an *an-archic* way in the sense of domination) if they create the possibility of resistance to the law, without which obedience to the law has no legitimacy. In this sense, the demand for the right to have rights is not formulated in the name of some inalienable human nature, nor with a view to restoring some natural equality, but to activate communal cooperation, to make the common world work. In the logic of sovereignty, the relation to the right is unidirectional, based on the obedience of the subject, even if legitimated by his own consent. In the interpretation of Balibar, Arendt seeks to correct the unidirectionality of legal positivism by incorporating into the constitution of the political sphere

an *impolitic* element which all institutions must constantly reactivate in order to become political, and it is precisely on this basis that he argues that the right of civil disobedience is in fact inherent in the spirit of the American Constitution, in the form of the right of free assembly and association. According to Balibar, the pressing problems of cosmopolitanism in the present era, through the phenomena of identity and refugee status, make it essential to rethink the question of borders. The contemporary practice of relating to refugees is characterised by an ambiguity that stigmatises the foreigner, yet does not close borders. This practice simultaneously connects and disconnects the two tendencies that characterise globalisation, which Balibar calls intercultural translation and global civil war. Balibar believes that, in today's context, the debate on cosmopolitanism needs to be rethought and even given a new name: he therefore speaks of cosmopolitics in this context. Cosmopolitics differs from geopolitics in that it seeks to articulate a conflictual practice or power that reflects the dilemmas arising from the opposition between the boundless, global use of citizenship and the particularist understanding of community. The raising of this problem implies the realisation that the notion of community, linked to the idea of cosmopolitanism, can no longer remain undefined in the discourse of cosmopolitanism, and must therefore take on an institutional form. Balibar argues that the global *demos* will never come into being, and that national and international politics must therefore be democratised, promoting equality and participation, and more and more mechanisms for holding governing bodies to account.

Philip Pettit proposed a concept of a functional state that seeks to meet the requirements of both decentralisation and social inclusion, integrating and institutionalising human rights, i.e. linking them to the mutual action of the community. According to him, the task of the functional state is to create a non-interference zone for citizens in which they can exercise their human rights with as little personal discretion as possible, while at the same time being free to make their own decisions as interlocutors, without fear of negative sanctions from others or having to make concessions in order to be reinforced by others. Subjective rights set limits on the extent to which people can exercise their discretion, regardless of the various personal or communal goals that may result from failing to exercise that discretion. The functional state can give its citizens collective countervailing power, i.e. in principle it can allow them to change or even completely replace sovereign power, which means that it can also allow the constitutional right of resistance as a constitutional liberty. In order to fulfil this possibility, Pettit introduces the notion of extra-constitutional power of the people, since, in his view, the dichotomy between the unincorporated people, i.e. the multitude, and the incorporated people, i.e. the *polis*, offers a misleading perspective on the concept of the people. To this end, he first introduces the conceptual distinction between fragmented disjunctive action and interconnected conjunctive action. When the members of a multitude act in a fragmented, disjointed way, each of them pursues its own goals and cannot be said to be doing something together or to be striving for some unified result. To obtain a properly articulated notion of the subject of joint political action, Pettit argues that it is also necessary to introduce the notion of an incorporating people, which, like and in contrast to the unincorporated people, denotes a plurality of individual agents rather than an unified body of them. The incorporating people, in Pettit's conception, can maintain the state in a negative way, by

involving almost all its members in the process. Behind this concept lies the assumption that the state is maintained by its members not only through active action and participation, or conscious obedience to the law, but also by merely not opposing or making impossible the obedience of others, i.e. by not questioning the right of the state to demand obedience. The collective action of the people does not, therefore, imply that it is directed towards the formation of a counter-power, for this would only make sense if power were understood as separable from this collective action, as distinct from it. On the other hand, since, as Pettit has pointed out, corpus organising is not only achieved through cooperation but also through the dynamics of competing procedures, a plural constitution, including both subjective rights and procedures of resistance, does not imply a separation of the incorporated people and the state. Therefore, the collective power of citizens is not in itself uniform and stable, but has competing, sometimes fragmented, sometimes convergent motives.

In the third chapter of the third part of this thesis, I deal with the relations between peoples, what is traditionally known as geopolitics, with a special focus on the problems of global justice. A major strand of theories dealing with this issue, known as neorealist theories, conceive of the interpretation of world political processes within the framework of power sharing between states, with strong reservations about the positive consequences of organised cooperation at the global level and the normative and coercive capacity of international organisations. In contrast, the other theories, which can be called neo-Marxist, also use the concept of sovereignty, albeit from a completely different perspective than neorealist theories. The basic thesis of the latter is that the present phase of capitalism combines the antagonistic logics of sovereignty and capital in a power order that can be captured in the transition to a society of control. While the logic of capital is opposed to the legitimating logic of sovereignty that demands limits, the logic of maximising productivity and keeping production costs low is interested in the construction of hybrid and mobile identities that correspond to the flows that emerge in the unregulated and deterritorialised space of the world market. The central question of this sub-chapter is: what concepts does the justice-based approach offer for interpreting the global order?

In answering this question, I will first examine John Rawls' theory of the law of peoples, which attempts nothing less than to elaborate the normative foundations of international relations. Rawls uses the term "peoples" to distinguish his theory from the term "state" as used in the Westphalian international law, which can be characterised in this perspective by the powers exercised by the sovereign. This ideal of equality and fair treatment between peoples creates the basic principles of the associations and various federations of peoples that form the basis of cooperation, which Rawls sees as ranging from mutual recognition of the freedom and independence of peoples to the obligation of mutual assistance. In his view, the law of peoples, as opposed to the individualism of cosmopolitanism, is aimed at the justice of societies, and he therefore considers that the form of loose and free association of peoples is the most appropriate form of cooperation for the ideal of *jus gentium*. His argument for the principle of self-determination of peoples is supported by the recognition of plurality, which is a departure from the main line of libertarian discourse and closer to the republican tradition. At the same time, Rawls

distinguishes between justice and egalitarianism, and even explicitly identifies inequality as an important driver of global political dynamics. From this thesis, Rawls argues that the measures that can be taken to achieve global justice must be limited, i.e. the duty of assistance to societies "in difficulty" must be directed at changing their political culture, not at levelling the level of material wealth globally. Rawls, on the other hand, holds that intolerance of offending states is permissible because such nations violate the global cooperation of free peoples, i.e. the whole edifice of the right of peoples. To this extent, therefore, it seeks to decouple the right to go to war from the question of sovereignty and to place it within the framework of the international law of politically organised peoples.

My question in the next subsection is whether it is possible to create some kind of normative framework at the global level against abuses of power or illegitimate uses of force, and what the implications of such proposals are for the theory of power. In this respect, Matthew Noah Smith seeks to develop the foundations of a philosophical model of decentralised global sovereignty, including the right to revolution. His proposal is that the same population can be governed simultaneously by a decentralised global sovereign and a traditional centralised national sovereign, i.e. that the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The global sovereign proposed by Smith would embody a legal order parallel to that established by the nation-state, but operating in a decentralised manner. Smith does not conceive of this decentralisation in spatial-physical terms, but rather in functional terms, i.e. as a multilevel dispersion of powers. In other words, he is not arguing for the devolution of political decision-making powers to the local level, as a practical application of the principles of self-government and subsidiarity, but rather for a thematic and network model of decentralisation. Smith's central thesis is that a politically decentralised global sovereign is feasible without the need to dismantle the sovereignty of nation states. The system outlined by Smith differs from the current order of international law in that it is an attempt to institutionalise a positive right to a concrete guarantee of protection of individuals against the excesses of power of individual states, which he calls the right to revolution. It is proposed that this right should be enacted and institutionalised by the decentralised global sovereign within its own jurisdiction, i.e. as part of a global system of defined rights. Since the authority of the decentralised global sovereign would not be challenged or destroyed in the event of a national revolution, only the national legal order would be violated and then recreated. Not only does a revolution with the empowerment of rights guaranteed by a decentralized global sovereign not entail a rejection of the rule of law, but in fact it presupposes both a general support for the rule of law (and thus a rejection of the kind of anarchy that strongly preoccupied Enlightenment contractarian authors) and an existing rule of law. However, it can be said that Smith's hypothesis revolves around the dilemmas raised by humanitarian law in proposing a modification of global regulation to balance state sovereignty, which still leaves unanswered the question of conflicts between individual states. Consequently, I consider that the most pressing issue in the international balance of power remains that of war.

At first sight, this question is irrelevant to the theory of power, because the question of war is in no way compatible with the question of power. However, if we look at the question from the

point of view of why, despite the development of international law, war remains the only means of dealing with conflicts that lead to the deterioration of relations between states, we need to look more closely at the concept of war. Since antiquity, the theory of war has been more concerned with how to distinguish between just and unjust war, and with describing the cases in which it is legitimate to go to war (*jus ad bellum*) and the conduct to be followed in war (*jus in bello*). But this type of questioning cannot separate the question of violence from the concept of war. Rawls' theory has also shown that contemporary discourse considers wars as legitimate as humanitarian intervention, i.e. as retaliation for the behaviour of offending states. To outline the concept of war more precisely, I will examine Rousseau's *The Principles of the Law of War*. In this work too, Rousseau rejects the Hobbesian concept of a war of all against all, and considers that war can only be spoken of after the formation of the state. However, the question of war is also closely related to the problem of justice, since in Rousseau's conception relations between states are much more intertwined, but at the same time much less balanced than relations between individuals, with the end result being nothing but mutual liquidation. Consequently, the essence of war is not armed struggle, but the negotiation of the public contract on which civil society is based, i.e. the struggle between the ways of being of political formations, which aims to offer the conqueror another social contract for the conquered, but in any case to permanently challenge its relationship with the current social contract. But what conclusions can we draw from these considerations in terms of power theory if we supplement this basic formula with Foucault's concept of politics as a continuation of war by other means. Is there any theoretical advantage to be gained from interpreting political antagonisms in terms of the concept of war?

My thesis is that we can only answer this question if we break with theories that promise to eliminate discord altogether and do not try to model social politics through separation of powers or negotiation to reconcile interests, that is, if we take account of the fact that conflicts between different groups may be those that can only be resolved at the cost of the dissolution of the groups. Social conflicts are often clashes of grievances that cannot necessarily be reconciled and resolved through rational negotiation with sufficient technical knowledge, since the conflicts that arise in such politics are fundamentally asymmetric. In other words, it may be more theoretically acceptable to accept that not only war conflicts but also power conflicts within the state arise as discord, according to Lyotard's definition of the term. In other words, the concept of power understood in this way can help to capture strategic situations that reveal fault lines in society, i.e., they can be useful for describing the historical dynamics of society. This notion of power can be considered critical because it highlights the essentially "polemical" nature of social dynamics, in the etymological sense of the word *polemos*, which means war. The theoretical conclusion that can be drawn from the above ideas, which can certainly be described as utopian and anarchist, is that associations detached from the state can be actors that also assume a commitment in the field of foreign policy. More precisely, if the fault lines that cut across societies could be placed in an international context and thematised in a corresponding public sphere, there would probably be a host of considerations that could override or at least relativize the root causes of war conflicts. In

addition, democratising the right to start wars and make peace, and giving smaller groups in society the power to do so, could do much to reduce the number of wars that break out.

In the final subsection on the power-theoretical implications of global justice issues, I first examine Thomas Nagel's distinctive political position, which argues that the mutual accountability of principles of justice through institutions can only take place between citizens who are closely politically connected. This thesis is underpinned by the principle that socio-economic justice is also socially associative, which, according to his interpretation, means that it depends on positive rights that are created by living, along with others, in a political society governed by a centrally imposed set of rules. At the heart of the Nagelian concept is a detachment of associationality from the criterion of consent. Indeed, it argues that the demand for egalitarian requirements does not necessarily imply an actual choice, consent or contract made by individuals, but is based on involuntary membership in the majority of cases. From this claim follows an extension of the notion of responsibility, since, according to Nagel, people are given a role in the collective order of action of each society without having a choice: society holds them responsible for the actions taken on its behalf, over which they may have quite considerable influence in an ideal democracy, but they must bear responsibility for obeying the laws and supporting the institutions that create and distribute the benefits and disadvantages. In the context of international relations, this means that Nagel does not see institutional justification for so-called humanitarian obligations on fundamental human rights against violence or international obligations that go beyond the right to hospitality. With regard to global justice, Nagel draws two conclusions. The first, which we might call the institutionalist thesis, is that it is also impossible to fulfil the moral minimum obligations expressed in the principle of humanitarian obligations without some kind of institutional guarantee. The second conclusion relates to the global extension of the institutionalist view and states that, while everyone has the right to live in a just society, no one has the obligation to live in the same just society with everyone else. It is from this understanding that Nagel argues that international institutions and treaties, as they stand, do not meet the political requirements of justice because they are not collectively and coercively enacted on behalf of all those whose lives they affect, and they do not have the kind of authority from individuals on which the responsibility to demand equal treatment can be based.

The principle of discontinuity between state and global levels, rejected by Nagel, is refuted by several theories. In this paper, I analyse the theoretical model of global inequality proposed by Iris Marion Young, which differs from institutionalist theories of global justice in that it argues that social relations between people can exist without the political institutions that govern them. Young examines contemporary cases of structural injustice, a concept used to describe situations that are difficult to challenge legally because, while it is true that a certain set of individuals and groups operate such structures of production for their particular ends, they explicitly act within the framework of the relevant laws. Such structural injustices do not lie in the mere fact that the structures they operate constrain actors, but rather in the way in which these structures influence, i.e. distort, the equitable conditions of cooperation. The concept of the social relation model of responsibility introduced by Young seeks to provide a suitable theoretical procedure for analysing

such global structural injustices, and argues that responsibility for such structures does not arise from the fact that people live under the authority of a single commonly agreed constitution and act in accordance with the rules laid down in it, but rather from their participation in the various institutional processes that produce structural injustice. It is in developing this extended concept of responsibility that Young introduces the notion of prospective responsibility, based on the argument that structural processes can only be changed if actors in different social positions intervene together, and that each actor is therefore responsible for shaping social processes in his or her own right. However, this concept also implies the thesis of the distribution of responsibility, which can only be adequately grasped within the framework of a multi-level, pluralist model. Different agents have different types of responsibility for certain aspects of justice, some arguably more than others, but this does not mean that they alone can sustain such structures. I believe that Young's understanding of global justice offers a multi-level, plural alternative to the Kantian *foedus pacificum*, where actors are not located at the same level of decision-making, are spatially located in different places, and their goals do not necessarily coincide. However, the success of their joint action can only be ensured if they can involve the victims of structural injustice in the action, if they can make them somehow shapers of history. This is not in the name of an allocative justice, but by taking up conflicts and opening up the space for political action. To this extent, global power as a practice of transnational collective action does not imply a demand for a single world-wide regulation, but rather a multi-polar, multi-level, networked political organisation that aims to extend justice globally, but at the same time does not delude itself that this can be done without conflict or politics.

In the final chapter of my thesis, I have drawn a number of conclusions on the concept of power. In the course of my research, I found the arguments in favour of the *relational* concept of power to be the most convincing. In my interpretation, power is thus to be found in shared human relations that take place in public, within an accepted institutional framework. Consequently, neither the possession of power nor the submission to power adequately expresses the relationship of individuals to power. In other words, neither the concepts of command nor obedience, and more generally, neither the concepts of effect nor of suffering, express the complexity inherent in the concept of power, since they simplify the multidimensional and dynamic character that characterises the concept. From this point of view, it would be more accurate to conceive of what is usually called the "relationship to power" as participation in a dynamic system of relations in which sometimes certain degrees of agreement and sometimes elements of conflict predominate. The relational conception of power has multiple implications. On the one hand, it leads to the theoretical conclusion that a substantive understanding of political relations between people is not compatible with the principle of reciprocity. On the other hand, in the light of the relational conception of power, the problems of coercion and obligation are also transformed. The notion of voluntary obligation can only be consistently conceived, and the legitimation of power through it can only be reasonably formalized, if the idea of obligation is not conceived as an unilateral concept but as a response to the correlative rights of others. To paraphrase Joel Feinberg's conceptual distinctions, I would formulate this thesis as follows: in a power relation, the demand

of one party on the other is not posited as a duty that the other will fulfil because of the expected consequences (*duty as liability*), as in the case of violence, but as an obligation based on the principle of reciprocity, which the other party will fulfil not under the burden of the expected consequences, but because of the responsibility that motivates his action.

Another conclusion of my reflections on the history of power can be the interpretation of the concept as *potentiality*, as a capacity. Indeed, I believe that Benhabib's reflections on democratic iterations or Pettit's reflections on the notion of the unincorporated people may suggest that it is not sufficient to capture the collective, institutionalised power of citizens in terms of the concept of rule exercised through office, and to conceive of the coercion exercised in this way in terms of the logic of decision making understood as an act, without a unidirectional, intersubjective dimension. Ober's conceptual analysis, justifying the Arendtian intuition, concludes that in Greek the term *kratos* generally signified the capacity to act through which *politēs* could exert some influence on collective action precisely by participating as equals in the "public power", i.e. in the debate in the *agora*. To this extent, Ober's Greek conception of democracy was not to exercise monopolistic dominion over the offices of the *polis*, or to usurp them, but to be empowered to perform certain actions in the common space, or even to change its structure. In other words, it can be concluded that this conception of power also highlights its productive character, in the sense that it can be conceptualised as the creation of relations between equal citizens.

At the same time, the examination of the theoretical questions of power raised by the processes of globalisation has also revealed that the phenomenon of power is never static but *dynamic*, never merely a state but rather a process, in other words, that the *temporal* nature of power is constitutive of the concept. The thesis of the temporality of power does not simply refer to the possible temporal alternation of different techniques and practices of power, of modes of governance, but, as Benhabib, Rancière or Balibar have pointed out, to the alternation of the actors involved in the power relation and, related to this, to the continuous transformation of the political scene itself, to the movement of the common space. One of Rousseau's findings shows that the absolutization of the general will goes hand in hand with a presentist, static conception of power: in his view every act of political power is absolute, that is, independent of everything that precedes it. Political power is not identical with the realization of certain intentions, but it is more appropriate to interpret it as one of the possible modes of integration into the present constellation of social relations. In other words, "power" is in a state of constant transformation, transition, repositioning, to this extent "power" does not exist, there are only *powers*.

Finally, my investigations point in the direction of the idea that power is a *conflictual* concept. If we interpret it on the basis of the principle of reciprocity, and if we think of it not as the depository of a single body, but as actually composed of the potentiality of multiple levels and multiple kinds of effects, then it becomes inevitable that it should be a field of collisions and conflicts, since the intermediate world it is about is not a single universe, but rather a pluriverse. Power is an intricate network of reciprocal relations in which each public act or non-public non-action of actors modifies the relations of power, and in this way inevitably comes into conflict or contradiction with the acts of other actors in relation to the common. I agree with Habermas's

assertion that power is not an instrumental use of the will of others or of others' will, but not that power relations can be formalized as a common will, or that they are directed towards or aim at consensus. In other words, the concept of power is a complex interplay of interactions in the sense that it not only closely links but also separates the actors involved, and its mode of operation, as Machiavelli perceived it, is therefore dissensual.

The theoretical hypotheses presented in this thesis can be summarised as essentially thinking about the problem of power within the conceptual framework that emerges in modernity. In other words, we have seen that the main problems identified in the second part of the thesis regarding the history of ideas (sovereignty, power sharing, federalism, cosmopolitanism) are still constant references in theories of power. This is true even to the denial or redefinition of concepts such as sovereignty or the public sphere of the nation-state, which underpinned the Westphalian system of sovereign states. What is common to proposals for reinterpretations of subjective freedoms or cosmopolitan law in a globalised framework is that they all tend to emphasise the political nature of the problem under consideration, and are all driven by the idea of separation of powers or resistance to power, even if they attempt to incorporate these principles into national constitutional and international regulatory mechanisms in different ways and at different levels. The novelty of contemporary theories of power can be marked in the introduction of the idea of global justice, the related redefinition of the responsibility ethic of approaches to duty, and the democratic reinterpretation of the concepts of conflict and dissensus.

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