The concept of power in Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault: a comparative analysis

Danielle Jacon Ayres Pinto, Cecilia Maieron Pereira

THE CONCEPT OF POWER IN HANNAH ARENDT AND MICHEL FOUCAULT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Danielle Jacon Ayres Pinto[1]

Cecília Maieron Pereira[2]

Abstract: The concept of power has been the focus of discussion of many thinkers that attempted to understand who are their agents, how it is created and what are its main goals. In this scenario, Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt have its respective and relevant conceptions of power and how it is expressed in our contemporary society. For the first thinker, power is everywhere and it is exercised in everyday life. For the german philosopher, power is expressed collectivelly. Therefore, the main goal of this essay is to analyse and compare their respective conceptions of power, especially how they understand resistance and violence. In this sense, by using bibliographic resources, this essay is a descriptive and comparative study about the conceptions of power for Hannah Arendt and for Michel Foucault. By a hypothetical-deductive approach, it is understood that the two conceptions are complementary since the French philosopher has a broader concept and Hannah Arendt offers more tools to analyse the possibility of resistance to power. In fact, the two thinkers offer us tools to comprehend power as a positive, criative and fluid factor.

Keywords: Power; Michel Foucault; Hannah Arendt.

O CONCEITO DE PODER EM HANNAH ARENDT E MICHEL FOUCAULT: UMA ANÁLISE COMPARATIVA

Resumo: O conceito de poder tem sido foco de discussão de muitos pensadores que tentam entender seus agentes, como é criado e quais são seus objetivos. Neste cenário, Michel

[1] Professora Adjunta do curso de Relações Internacionais da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM) e coordenadora do Grupo de Estudo, Extensão e Pesquisa em Política Internacional Contemporânea (GEPPIC/UFSM). Possui doutorado em ciência política na área de relações internacionais pela Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) e mestrado em Relações Internacionais na área de estudos de paz e segurança pela Universidade de Coimbra. Possui interesse em estudos sobre política externa brasileira, política internacional, mediação de conflitos, geopolítica, resolução de conflitos, soft power, smart power, poder e direito internacional. E-mail para contato: djap2222@yahoo.com
[2] Graduanda do 8º semestre em Relações Internacionais pela Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM), integrante do Grupo de Estudos, Extensão e Pesquisa em Política Internacional Contemporânea (GEPPIC) e bolsista de extensão do Grupo de Estudos em Capacidade Estatal, Segurança e Defesa (GECAP). Tem interesse nas áreas de Política Internacional, Construção do Estado, Migrações Internacionais e Segurança Internacional. E-mail para contato: cecilia_maieron@hotmail.com

Foucault e Hannah Arendt possuem suas respectivas e relevantes contribuições sobre o que é poder e como ele é expresso na nossa sociedade contemporânea. Para o primeiro pensador, o poder está em todos os lugares e é exercício cotidianamente. Para a pensadora alemã, o poder é expressado por uma coletividade. O objetivo deste artigo, portanto, é analisar e comparar suas visões sobre poder, sobretudo sobre como entendem resistência e violência. Dessa forma, partindo de fontes bibliográficas, realiza-se um estudo descritivo e comparado das visões de poder para Hannah Arendt e Michel Foucault. Com abordagem hipotética-dedutiva, compreende-se que as duas concepções podem ser consideradas como complementares uma vez que o filósofo francês possui um conceito mais amplo que Hannah Arendt e esta contribui melhor para se analisar a possibilidade de resistência ao poder. De fato, estes dois autores nos possibilitam compreender o poder enquanto fator positivo, criador e fluído.

Palavras-chave: Poder; Michel Foucault; Hannah Arendt.

I. Introduction

Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault are 20th century thinkers that contributed for the debate on the concept of power. Both understandings of the concept distinguish themselves from traditional approaches, for instance, by considering power as an exercise which means that no one can actually "possess" it. On the one hand, the French philosopher expanded this concept beyond the spheres of the State, to approach power as productive relation in our daily lives. The author applied power within many facets such as knowledge and discipline. If power, for Foucault, is everywhere, resistance and agency remains unclear in his conception. On the other hand, in Hannah Arendt's view, power corresponds to our ability to act in concert (1969, p. 44). By addressing it as a collective capacity, the political philosopher contributes to understand resistance and emancipation. However, Arendt attempts to distinguish and oppose violence from power; therefore, she does not address it as coercion, only as consent of a group. In sum, as argued by Amy Allen, connections between the works of these two authors can be seen in many points such as the critique of sovereign power and its social nature (2001, p. 131). Power for both authors, as it will be argued in this essay, not only converge, but also are complementary in some sense.

As noted by Robert Dahl, power is embedded in our history and language, as "Macht", "potestas" or "pouvoir" (1957, p. 201). This term has historically divided opinions around this social phenomenon that affects all of us in attempt to understand it. In this essay, we seek to analyze and compare Hannah Arendt's and Michel Foucault's respective conception of power. After a brief exposure of traditional views of the concept, we seek to assess Michel Foucault ideas about the term. His notable contributions are many such as its expansion of power relations as a wide network. Nevertheless, we will discuss that resistance and agency are unclear in Foucault's conception. In the third part of this essay, we will analyse the concept of power by Hannah Arendt. We argue that her concept provides analytical tools to understand emancipation and collective agency. On the other hand, we will discuss about her opposition between violence and power. As noted by Elizabeth Young-Bruehl, this is a challenging assumption (2006, p. 90). Finally, we would like to argue that both conceptions of power converge and are complementary in some aspects (Gordon, 2002, p. 133).

II. From Michel Foucault to Hannah Arendt: contextualizing the concept of power

According to W. B. Gallie, a concept can be essentially contested for better or worse reasons. In his view, a concept has an assumption of agreement or disagreement regarding its use and applicability (1956, p. 167). In other words, by contesting concepts it is possible to enrich the debate to what can be a better approach and use of this concept on a determined context and historical process. Under these circumstances, a long discussion has been made around the concept of power. As part of our everyday lives, power presupposes a range of another terms, such as coercion, manipulation, freedom, will, authority, sovereignty (WENMAN, 2005, p. 371). As noted by Robert Dahl, power is a relation among a variety of actors, for instance, individuals and institutions (1957, p. 203). In a sense, power is part of our social selves and it helps to understand who we are and how we live.

In his book *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes (1998, p. 58) argues that power is used as a means to obtain "some future apparent good". In addition, the English philosopher also suggested that power relations are the excess of power that A has over B (WENMAN, 2005, p. 371-372). With regard to this discussion, the concept of power can be conceived as "power-to" and "power-over". For Mark Wenman, the former refers to the capacity that one agent has that can be exercised in order to achieve his ends (2005, p. 371). The latter, on the other hand, refers to the exercise of coercion and domination (2005, p. 372). Theorists have diverged on which expression of power prevails. According to John Holloway, power-to is always exercised socially and has the capacity to create and transform (2003, p. 12). On the other hand, for the political scientist Robert Dahl power-over is predominant. The author illustrates it as the following situation: "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (1957, p. 202-203). Either a more positive standpoint or an oppressive one, power also diverge opinions regarding whether it is a possession or an exercise. Therefore, for Thomas Wartenberg power must be comprehended as both (1988, p. 9). For poststructuralist theories, on the contrary, argues that no one can fully possess power (WENMAN, 2005, p. 375).

In sum, the debate around the concept of power relates to its nature, its agents and what results from it. It is within this debate that Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt attempted to discuss their respective concepts of power. The authors of the 20th century attempted to bring new forms of understanding power for traditional perspectives. Michel Foucault is commonly identified with poststructuralist theories, which highlighted the relational nature of power. Therefore, it is not something that is possessed, but it is exercised

(WENMAN, 2005, p. 375). As for Hannah Arendt, she has long philosophical influences, from Aristotle to Heidegger. In addition, the turbulent historical context of the 1960's has also influenced her views (BERNSTEIN, 2011, p. 3-4). Although Richard Bernstein address to Hannah Arendt, it is possible to argue that it also influenced Michel Foucault (2011, p. 3-4). In a sense, events such as the students' movement and how the American and European societies of that time were organized offered new insights to these authors to problematize power.

III. Michel Foucault on power: a broad view of the concept

The French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault proposes a new perspective on power. In this sense, him reinforces its social aspect by extending the view of how power relations are produced in our society and by whom. Under these circumstances, power is conceived as a product of relations since no individuals, institutions or states possess power. Therefore, power is not a "thing' that one owns but 'it is created from one moment to the other […], or rather in every relation from one point to another" (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 93). In sum, power is fluid within society, which implicates in negative or positive results. The aim of this section is to analyse what is power for the poststructuralist thinker, its contributions and critics to his theory of power.

The strength of the concept of power as constructed by Foucault is its dynamic expression. Differently from the traditional view of the term, power relations embrace aspects of our daily lives. As Mark Wenman argues few would deny that Michel Foucault rendered great contributions to comprehend power (2005, p. 376). Under these circumstances, Michel Foucault seeks to expand the concept of power beyond "institutions and mechanisms' that secure the obedience of the citizens and the "mode of subjugation" in the form of the rule (1978, p. 92). In addition, it reinforces that power is not restricted by the "sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the over-all unity of a domination" (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 92). In the words of Foucault, power "needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression" (1980, p. 119). The philosopher does not deny "power-over", in other words, the power that produces coercion (WENMAN, 2005, p. 372). However, he suggests that power is also a positive mechanism that is capable of transforming our society. Power in this sense can be positive since it "traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (FOUCAULT, 1980, p. 119).

In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality,* Michel Foucault defines the most important aspects of his conception of power (1978, p.94-96). Firstly, it is not something that can be acquired or shared, consequently, power is exercised in "non-egalitarian and mobile relations" (1978, p. 94). By understanding power as an exercise, Foucault differentiates from traditional conceptions of power by reinforcing that one cannot hold power to oneself. It is not something static that A keeps for itself or uses to get B to do something they would not otherwise do, but instead it is part of our social daily lives. Furthermore, those relations are not restricted by sovereignty of the State. Instead, power encompasses a range of other relations, for instance, from economic processes to sexual relationships (1978, p. 94). In sum, power is the direct effect of inequalities and disequilibrium in those relations. For that reason, Foucault's conception of power does not identify with superstructural positions, which would characterize power as prohibition, coercion and repression. In this sense, Lisa Downing argues that Foucault has a different methodology from Marx's analysis of power that goes beyond the relation of dominator and dominated (2008, p. 5). In his view, the manifestations of power that take place in the production system, in families, groups and institutions are the actual basis for wide power relations that run through the social body (1978, p. 94).

Another aspect that should be considered in order to comprehend the concept of power for Foucault, is that power is always exercised in accordance with an aim or an objective (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 95). It does not necessarily imply that the subject that exercises this power has rationally conceived this path of action (1978: 95). It follows that for Foucault, power involves many aspects of our being, from whom we are to how we think. For instance, biopower has submitted our physical existence to the conditions of working, trading and living in modern society (WENMAN, 2005, p. 378). Knowledge is also a product of power relations within culture (LUKES, 2005, p. 88). According to Peter Digeser, Foucault suggests that there is no relation of power without "a field of knowledge" (1992, p. 986). To conclude, for Foucault we live in a disciplinary society, which implies that there is a wide network of micropowers that submit individuals into constant surveillance (WENMAN, 2005, p. 378).

For Foucault, discipline is a type of power (1977, p. 215). The works of Foucault on the Panoptic helps us to understand the constant vigilance of disciplinary power. Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham created the panoptic and it can be described as the architecture of a prison (it can be applied for schools and hospitals as well) created to maximise the capacity to observe and control those that were considered criminals (LUKES, 2005, p. 99). It is constituted by a central tower in a circular building. Those who occupy the cells cannot know when exactly they are being watched or not. Therefore, the panoptic "arranges spatial

unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately" (FOUCAULT, 1977, p. 200). It assures the constant visibility of the prisoner and the "automatic functioning of power" (FOUCAULT, 1978, p. 201). As noted by Dreyfus and Rabinow, the architecture of the Panoptic is a means for exercising power and it also shows a "connection between the control of bodies and spaces" (1983, p. 190-192).

As the example of the Panoptic shows, the conception of power for Foucault has many facets and we attempted to briefly expose his main ideas. However, as argued by Edward Said, Foucault is imprecise regarding the possibilities to resist power (1986, p. 151). In this sense, Michel Foucault argues that wherever there is power, there is resistance (1978, p. 95). If power is everywhere, what is unclear in Foucault's concept of power is the possibility for human agency. According to Peter Digeser, the French philosopher's concept of power does not provide a way out of it, because power is not defined in opposition to freedom (1992, p. 981). In fact, the author argues that who we are and what we believe is a product of power relations (1992, p. 982). Digeser defends that the genealogy of our society is made out of power relations: our political, economic, legal and religious practices are developed within a context governed by rules and discourses resulted from power relations (1992, p. 982).

However, the idea of resistance suggests that an individual can never be fully regularised. The subject agency in Foucault's disciplinary society occurs in a different way. Individuals as agents are forged by institutionalized techniques of education and self-discipline (DIGESER, 1992, p. 1003-1004). This leads to Dreyfus and Rabinow questioning if is there any possibility to resist within this disciplinary society (1983, p. 206). As argued by Steven Lukes, if we take into account that there is no possibility to stay away from power relations, there is little space for human emancipation (2005, p. 92). In conclusion, as the purpose of Foucault was not to formulate a theory of power, the term must be understood within a certain context. Although he attempted to address resistance and agency, there are not sufficient mechanisms for these possibilities for human action in Foucault's assumptions.

IV. Hannah Arendt's concept of power: a collective force

The concept of power for Hannah Arendt is very simply defined. On her book *On Violence*, the author conceives power as "the human ability not just to act but to act in concert" (1969, p. 44). In other words, it is never something that one individual possesses, in fact, it belongs to a collectivity and it lasts as long as the group is together. As an example, the power of a government for Hannah Arendt is the consent of a certain number of people that

delegates empowerment to somebody to act in their name (1969, p. 44). Therefore, power no longer exists if the group is not formed or if there is no consent. According to Mark Wenman, Hannah Arendt goes in a different direction to "power-over". In his view, the political thinker give emphasis to a correlation between power and authority and that consent is the basis for the exercise of power (2005, p. 372). Therefore, as noted by Richard Bernstein, power for Hannah Arendt is horizontal and it is the centre of her political thought (2011, p. 10).

Under these circumstances, the Brazil's Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra (Landless Workers Movement) is an example of how power is exercised collectively that can resist and contests other forms of power. In his book, *The Fault Lines of Globalization*, Hans Lindahl argues that collective action by the movement aims to encourage the Brazilian government to adopt an agrarian reform (2013, p. 53). The group, for instance, occupy unused lands as a form of protest in reference to the legal right to expropriate properties that are not executing its social function (2013, p. 53). The Landless Workers Movement, therefore, meet with Arendt's criteria for exercise of power. It refers to a collective emancipation that aims to achieve their rights. Her ideas provide means to understand revolutions and resistance groups throughout history.

In order to understand Hannah Arendt's conception of power is necessary to differentiate power from strength, force, authority and violence. Firstly, strength for Hannah Arendt is singular and individual. A person cannot exercise power; it can only exercise its strengths of its character (1969, p. 44). Power, in sum, is formed by a collectivity or consented by this collectivity to one individual to govern. Secondly, force is different from violence in Arendt's view and it is the energy exercised by 'physical and social movements' (1969, p. 44-45). Thirdly, authority can be seen in interpersonal relations, such as between a father and a son. It is also found in the hierarchy of offices and the Church. To summarize authority refers to recognition of respect for those that obey, in other words, it is not coercion or persuasion (1969, p. 45). In conclusion, strength, force and authority are the background concepts for her understanding of violence and power (BERNSTEIN, 2011, p. 8). The concept of violence is going to be analysed later in this section.

Hannah Arendt's concept of power identifies with Antonio Negri's concept of *constituent power*. It refers to an active common element of modern revolutions, popular organizations and it possesses an inseparable democratic principle (1999, p. VII-VIII). On the other hand, *constituted power* is a fixed expression of power of constitutions and authorities (1999, p. VII-VIII). Antonio Negri (1999, p. 167) utilizes Arendt's assumptions of revolution to explicit how constituent power works. For instance, what happened in France in 1789 and

the United States in 1776 were two distinguished forms of revolution (1999, p. 14). The former is a social revolution that aimed freedom and liberty, but applied coercion and violence as means to achieve it. On the other hand, the latter is for Arendt an example of political revolution that allowed producing cooperation and freedom (1999, p. 14). As argued by Negri, the referred revolution is defended by Hannah Arendt because it unites constituent and constituted power for the emancipation of the political (1999, p. 167). Arendt seeks a better approach on how can human agency results in freedom. By contraposing the French Revolution, she criticizes processes that simply replace of one authority to other (YOUNG-BRUEHL, 2006, p. 84-85). As Mark Wenman argues, for Hannah Arendt the end of the eighteenth century in France went to other direction than that of constituent power by aligning the subject as a sovereign will of the nation which led to the Napoleon Era (2013, p. 69-71).

In fact, Hannah Arendt's concept of power finds one of its strengths by addressing non-violent collective power. As Richard Bernstein argues, the philosopher was one of the few political thinkers to comprehend what are the implications when nonviolent power develops and expands (2011, p. 29). In accordance, in Negri's view, Hannah Arendt provide a praxis for the collective, while for the subject can only express its strength (1999, p. 167). The author also suggests that what permeates in Hannah Arendt's works is political emancipation (1999, p. 16). In fact, she argues in favour of a democratic, equal and just political freedom.

In her book *Between Past and Future*, she argues that freedom has always been comprehended within the political realm (2006, p. 144). Freedom, for Hannah Arendt, is the final aim of political action (2006, p. 145). In sum, the author argues that "the *raison d'être* of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action" (2006, p. 145). Freedom and politics are compatible elements that converge into action and this seeks to create and bring something into existence. Therefore, action is determined primarily by "judgement", which depends upon the circumstances of the context, being either right or wrong (2006, p. 150). It is followed by the "will" that commands the execution of action. It varies depending on strength and weaknesses (2006, p. 15). Finally, "principles" are determined by the inspiration of the action. Hannah Arendt argues that principles, such as glory or equality, only exists and are guidance to action as long as the action is performed (2006, p. 151). In summary, the author provides tools to comprehend human agency and call us into action, because she understands that to be free is similar to act (2006, p. 151). Elizabeth Young-Bruehl complements Hannah Arendt's human agency by stating that it reveals who we are (2006, p. 9).

However, it is time to return to Arendt's conception of violence. Hannah Arendt distinguishes violence from power and force, because in her view what matters most in some cases is not the intended goals of political action, but the means applied to achieve them (1969, p. 46). The author argues that "violence is the implement of tools designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength" (1969, p. 46). In other words, violence in Arendt's conception is the antithesis of power, it is illegitimate and anti-political (BERNSTEIN, 2011, p. 10). It is an antithesis of power because whenever one rules absolutely the other is not present (1969, p. 56). Whenever they are combined, power is the predominant factor, because it is legitimate while violence can be only justifiable, but not legitimate (1969, p. 52). As a collective action, power requires numbers. Violence, on the contrary, is based only on implements (1969, p. 41-42). For this reason, the author criticises the Black Power movement of the 1960s by implementing violence, but appraised the nonviolent students' movements. (1969, p. 18).

This distinction between violence and power in Hannah Arendt's conception is criticised by many authors. In Richard Bernstein assumptions, the difference between violence and power in Arendt's conception provides us a critical perspective about our contemporary politics (2011, p. 12). Bernstein suggests that the political issue concerning violence is the "justification" of violence (2011, p. 14). In this sense, Elizabeth Young-Bruehl uses the example of terrorism after the 9/11 attacks to the World Trade Centre as an expression of antipolitical aims of a group (2006, p. 68). Moreover, the response of "War on Terror" led by the United Sates were also antipolitical (2006, p. 72). By utilizing the justification of violence, those actions are dissociated from power.

On the other hand, Keith Breen argues that power and violence implicates one another, and that they cannot be seen as opposites (2007, p. 363). His main critique is that at times violence as power is sometimes valuable and legitimate (2007, p. 363). In accordance, Habermas argues that force has always been used for the purposes of a legitimate power (1977, p. 18). Young-Bruehl agrees that Arendt's distinction between violence and power is the most challenging of her contributions (2006, p. 90). We live in a world where it is common to associate both terms - especially in wars in which the possessor of superior means of violence is more likely to win (2006, p. 91). What Hannah Arendt believes is that nonviolent power lasts longer and people seek 'public happiness' (2006, p. 91-92). In summary, Hannah Arendt's conception of power is dissociated with violence because power is not associated with repression and coercion. As Richard Bernstein notes, Arendt does not address to the question of "who rules whom" (2011, p. 9). Power in her view does not assume

any vertical relation; in fact this would be considered authority. However, "power-over" is an expression of power within modern society. Although Hannah Arendt contributes to understand human agency, domination and control as forms of power are not into account on her assumptions.

V. Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault: a complementary concept

Following the individual evaluations on the respective concept of power for Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt, in this section we seek to analyse them together. As noted by Amy Allen, both conceptions of power converge in certain points and can be complementary on the other (2002, p. 131). Although how they formulate and theorize power is different, they offer a critique to sovereign power and they commonly address power as a social relation (ALLEN, 2002, p. 132). Hannah Arendt provides for Foucault's concept a better understanding of human agency, while the French philosopher has a more broad view of power in society.

The most important critique that both Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt commonly discuss is the sovereign power. In *Power and Knowledge*, Foucault rejects the idea that power has only a repressive facet and is only expressed in a juridical form. That would undermine the fact that power is most of all productive and its relations are not restricted by State boundaries (1980, p. 119-122). Only conceiving it in the spheres of the sovereign is to discard the predominant series of power networks that there is (1980, p. 122). Furthermore, Hannah Arendt in her book *On Violence*, rejects the assumption of power "in terms of command and obedience", because it equates power with violence (1969, p. 47). In her view, if power is the efficiency of command, there is no major power than that expressed "out of the barrel of a gun" (1969, p. 37). In fact, this critique to sovereign power and therefore the expansion and implications of the concept to other relations is a common strength of their conception.

According to Amy Allen, it is possible to indicate two main similarities between Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault (2002, p. 142). Firstly, the author argues that both conceptions bring the relational nature of power. Power for both authors is not a thing, it cannot be hold or possessed. It is within social relations that power is exercised. In a sense, those conceptions are connected with the idea of "power-to", exposed in the context of this essay. As argued by Mark Wenman, Hannah Arendt relates power and authority in the basis of consent. Therefore, her views criticize the concept of "power-over" or power as coercion (2005, p. 372). Foucault, on the contrary, does not deny that power can be exercised over

others (WENMAN, 2005, p. 372). The other similarity recognised by Amy Allen is power as a condition for the possibility of both agency and subjectivity (2002, p. 142). However, as argued before, Foucault's account on power and agency is unclear. In this aspect, according to the author, Hannah Arendt provides better tools for understanding the possibilities to break free from those relations that constrain and empower us (ALLEN, 2002, p. 142). Her works on revolutions and her own concept support the possibilities for human agency. In accordance, Neve Gordon agrees that Hannah Arendt refers to notions of emancipation in a more tangible way, mostly by using political terms (2002, p. 136). Moreover, while Arendt's views are focused on the collective agency, the main interest for Foucault is the subject (DREYFUS; RABINOW, 1983, p. 209). Therefore, after analysing both conceptions one can have a better understanding about how can power relations happen in both spheres.

In this brief session, we attempted to show that Hannah Arendt's and Michel Foucault's conception of power have important contributions for traditional approaches to the concept. In Amy Allen view, although those authors converge in some aspects, a broader view of power is required (2002, p. 145). Both authors call attention for a determined aspect, historical context and society in order to understand the term. In sum, their conceptions suggest that power is complex phenomena that constrains, forms and transforms society. Therefore, it must be continuously and essentially contested.

VI. Conclusions

In conclusion, the purpose of this essay was to analyze and compare Michel Foucault's and Hannah Arendt's respective conceptions of power. Firstly, the French philosopher has many contributions to the concept. The strength of Michel Foucault's concept lies in its expansion of power relations beyond the state, because he comprehends power as network of relations. In this sense, power is exercised every day and in determined context. Power is everywhere, either at school or at prisons. For Foucault, power has many facets such as knowledge and discipline. However, resistance is not very clear in his conception, because power is everywhere and involves many aspects of ourselves. In this point, Hannah Arendt finds its main contribution. She provides better tools for human agency and for collective emancipation. The concept of power for the political philosopher is a positive capacity of creation. However, in this essay, we problematized her opposition between violence and power, because violence might be a mean for power's aims.

In this essay, we also attempted to expose that Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt respective understandings of power converge in some aspects. Most importantly, those conceptions represent a contribution for traditional approaches to the concept. For instance, the thinkers address power as a relation, not a thing that is hold and possessed. Therefore, power is not concentrated in the spheres of the State, instead, it is produced and exercised by individuals and collectivities. Under these circumstances, power is fluid within society creating a wide network of relations. The authors also criticize the assumption that power is repressive and restricted by a top-down relation. Instead, power is productive, positive and creative; it produces knowledge and brings something into existence. In this sense, by assuming the creative results of power, human agency is also a contribution of Foucault's and Arendt's conceptions. While the former addressed how resistance to power is exercised on a daily basis, the latter helps us to understand human agency. As proposed by W. B. Gallie, essentially contested concepts must constantly renewed to better suit in a determine context and reality (1957, p. 167). The main authors that were analysed in this essay provide better tools for individuals and groups to create and resist.

VII. Bibliography

ALLEN, Amy. "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency: Between Arendt and Foucault", **International Journal of Philosophical Studies**, Vol.10, No. 2, pp. 131-149, 2002.

ARENDT, Hannah. **On Violence**, London: Harvest/HBJ Book, 1969.

ARENDT, Hannah. **Between Past and Future- Eight exercises in political thought**. London: Penguin Books, 2006.

BERNSTEIN, Richard. "Hannah Arendt's Reflections on Violence and Power", **Iris**, No.III, pp. 3-30, 2011.

BREEN, Keith. "Violence and power: A critique of Hannah Arendt on the "political"", **Philosophy & Social Criticism**, Vol.33, No.3, pp. 343-272, 2007.

DAHL, Robert. "The Concept of Power", **Behavioural Science**, Vol.2, No.3, pp.201-215, 1957.

DIGESER, Peter. "The Fourth Face of Power", **The Journal of Politics**, Vol.54, No.4, pp.977-1007, 1992.

DOWNING, Lisa. **The Cambridge Introduction to Michel Foucault**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

DREYFUS, Hubert; RABINOW, Paul. **Michel Foucault: beyond structuralism and hermeneutics**, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983.

FOUCAULT, Michel. **Discipline and punish- the birth of the prison**, London: Penguin Books,1977.

FOUCAULT, Michel. **The History of Sexuality: Vol.1- An Introduciton**, New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

FOUCAULT, Michel. **Power/Knowledge-Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977**, New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

GALLIE, W.B. "Essentially Contested Concepts", **Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society**, Vol.56, pp.167-198, 1956.

GORDON, Neve. "On Visibility and Power: An Arendtian Corrective of Foucault", **Human Studies**, Vol. 25, No.2, pp.125-145, 2002.

HABERMAS, Jurgen; MCCARTHY, Thomas. "Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power", **Social Research**, Vol.44, No.1, pp. 3-24, 1977.

HOBBES, Thomas. **Leviathan**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

HOLLOWAY, John. **Change the World Without Taking Power- A meaning of Revolution Today"**, Pluto Press, 2003.

HOY, David (ed). **Foucault: a critical reader**, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

LINDAHL, Hans. **Fault Lines of Globalizations- Legal Order and the Politics of A-legality**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

LUKES, Steven. **Power: A Radical View. [online]**. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Available from:<http://www.myilibrary.com?ID=85996> 6 December 2015.

NEGRI, Antonio. **Insurgencies- Constituent Power and the Modern State**, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

YOUNG-BRUEHL, Elisabeth. **Why Arendt Matters**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

WARTENBERG, Thomas. "The Forms of Power", **Analyse & Kritik**, Vol.10, pp. 3-31, 1988.

WENMAN, Mark. "Power", in I. Mackenzie (ed.) **Political concepts: a reader and guide.** Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp.370-403, 2005.

WENMAN, Mark. **Agonistic Democracy. [online]**. Cambridge University Press, 2013. Available from:<http://www.myilibrary.com?ID=538471> 6 December 2015.