

# The dimensions of production of the commons and health

## As dimensões da produção do comum e a saúde

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### Abstract

The aim of this work is to trace a potentially problematic field within the health field and be able to form new powers of invention. The basic assumption is that there is a problem with the commons which cannot be solved simply by dividing the political-legal and economic systems of the world between the public and private sectors, leading to a problematic perspective that overcomes dichotomies considered insistent and limits the thought and actions within the health field (public-private, nature-culture, etc.). After recognition of the presence of the commons notion in European political and intellectual history, we seek to support the philosophical thought for a more consistent delineation of the problem, focusing on how this problem appears in the philosophy of Spinoza, Deleuze and Negri. This path makes it possible to explore other dimensions of the predicament of the commons, already specified as a problem of production. Since other dimensions are related, it explores mainly the so called ontological dimension. This multidimensional understanding of the production of the commons allows for the replacement of problems within the health field, which will be preliminarily explored in this essay around two main issues: health as a value-affect and health as a result of work (creative ontological human activity). We conclude with considerations about the production centrality of the commons within the work organization and in the production of wealth in contemporary capitalism and how urgent is the political task of forming the commons as a democratic public sphere, so that the “cooperative singularities,” which

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produce and depend on the commons, could preserve their rights and control over it.

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## Resumo

O objetivo deste trabalho é traçar um campo problemático potencialmente colocado para a saúde que seja capaz de constituir novas potências de invenção. Parte-se do pressuposto de que há um problema do comum que não se resolve simplesmente na divisão político-jurídica e econômica do mundo entre o público e o privado, buscando-se um recorte problemático que supere dicotomias consideradas insistentes e limitantes do pensamento e da ação no campo da saúde (público-privado, natureza-cultura etc.). Após breve reconhecimento da presença da noção de comum na história política e intelectual europeia, busca-se apoio no pensamento filosófico para um delineamento mais consistente do problema, concentrando-se no modo como este comparece na filosofia de Spinoza, Deleuze e Negri. Nesse caminho, adentra-se outras dimensões do problema do comum, já especificado como problema da produção do comum. Explora-se principalmente a chamada dimensão ontológica do problema, considerando que as outras dimensões lhe são correlatas. Essa compreensão multidimensional da produção do comum permite uma re colocação de problemas no campo da saúde, que serão preliminarmente explorados neste ensaio, em torno de duas questões principais: a saúde como um valor-afeto e como resultado do trabalho (atividade ontocriativa humana). Conclui-se com considerações sobre a centralidade da produção do comum na organização do trabalho e na produção de riquezas no capitalismo contemporâneo e sobre a urgente tarefa política de que o comum se constitua como esfera pública democrática, para que as “singularidades operantes”, que produzem e dependem desse comum, preservem seus direitos e controle sobre ele.

**Palavras-chave:** Saúde; Filosofia; Política; Trabalho; Comum; Produção do Comum.

“[...] the problem always has a solution it deserves, in the terms of the way in which it is stated”

Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*

This paper seeks to take all of the possible consequences of the ideas expressed in the brief formula of the paragraph above, based on the understanding that there are badly stated problems in the health field and that new problems need to be created. Therefore, its goal is far from the answers or solutions whatsoever, but to state other possible problems. I try to trace, with the support of philosophical thought, a problematic field that seems to be potentially placed in the actuality of health field and could, in our view, contribute to pull us off some contumacious impasses, constituting new powers of invention, especially of reinvention of the practices in this field.

I consider, for example, that this field is overly driven by a dichotomous and narrow understanding of some dual pairs (public-private opposition, the separation between nature and culture, and between biological and social issues etc.), that can possibly be more limiting than contributing to thought and action. These dualities and oppositions are not facts or givens, but historical manners of placing a problem, that can be questioned and will be, taking into account our current political struggle and work experiences in this field, and believing that the *problem of health* can “deserve better solutions”.

In this sense, the basic assumption of this essay is that there is a problem of the *commons* that cannot be solved or simply reduced to a sense of *public* (understood here as state-owned or that which is warranted, managed and regulated by the government authority of the State), understood as the only alternative to *private*. There is a problem of the commons, of the goods and wealth that are common to all - they are of the material world (air, water and all the gifts of nature necessarily shared, as well as all the material means necessary for the reproduction of life), they are a result of the social interaction and production (which are strictly necessary for interaction itself and social production, such as languages, codes, images, information, knowledge and affections). In short, there is a *problem of the*

*commons* that goes beyond the political-legal and economic division of the world between the public and the private.

### **Commons**

This issue, in fact, is not new and has been traditionally identified within the field of interdisciplinary studies on shared natural resources (air, water, forests, fisheries, wildlife), usually being called in English literature by the term *commons* (a word that is difficult to translate and even awkward in English, wherein the same word can be both singular and plural).

The idea of *commons* has actually a long political and intellectual history:

Historically in Europe, “commons” were shared agricultural fields, grazing lands, and forests that were, over a period of 500 years, enclosed, with communal rights being withdrawn, by landowners and the state. The narrative of enclosure is one of privatization, the haves versus the have-nots, the elite versus the masses (Hess, Ostrom, 2007, p. 12).

A story of enclosures that did not stop only in the land commons, but had spread to several other *commons*, revealing at every new enclosure a world of communal attributes. This is, for example, “the story of Boyle (2003) about the ‘Second Enclosure Movement’, featuring the enclosure of the ‘intangible commons of the mind’, through rapidly expanding intellectual property rights.” (Hess, Ostrom, 2007, p. 12).

However, already having a long history, the intensification of intellectual production around this concept is a more recent phenomenon and seems to follow closely with the intensification of the process of “*enclosure of the commons*”. This production have, in fact, progressively expanded over the last half of the century, both in the more traditional approach centered on natural resources, which is highlighted by the works of biologist (Hardin, 1968) and economist (Ostrom, 1990), as well as in new approaches including among the *commons* the resources produced by man, in particular “knowledge commons” (Hess, Ostrom, 2007). It should be noted, there is a close correspondence between the growing importance of this concept and the advancement of neoliberalism

and their attempts to subordinate every form of life and knowledge to the privatizing logic of the market.

In this sense, part of these studies adopt a perspective of political resistance to the enclosure of the *commons* processes, many of them assuming that a “politics of the *commons*” could provide the basis for non-capitalist economic practices and a reconfiguration of power relations in society, particularly those of gender relations. Among the latter, we highlight the eco-feminists studies that consider that “[...] women have depended on access to communal natural resources more than men and have been most penalized by their privatization and most committed to their defense” (Federici 2011, p. 5).

In another direction, the question of the *commons* and, especially, the enclosure of the commons, arises as a problem of the capitalistic perspective. International bodies such as the World Bank and the United Nations (UN) have appropriated the idea of *commons* in such a to make it fully functional to the market. According to the organ principal of market economy, in the last 150 years, the British magazine *The Economist* (2008), “[...] the economy of the commons (...) may yet prove a useful way of thinking about problems, such as managing the internet, intellectual property or international pollution.” To mainstream economists, the *commons* are essentially a dimension of productive resources whose major problems are related to their use, governance and sustainability. These shared resources are, in fact, a matter of the utmost importance to capitalism, since it is structurally dependent on the appropriation of a huge amount of these resources.; in general, they appear to the market as mere “externalities” (starting with domestic unpaid work, which depends on the reproduction of the work force, but also all forms of costs that are imposed on common resources, such as pollution of the environment by waste production, whose ownership of the goods produced is private). The attention to this issue has become so important that it received, in 2009, the Nobel Prize in Economics, given the political scientist Elinor Ostrom, for his theoretical and empirical studies on the operation of *common-pool resource* institutions (institutions that share common resources that are highly subtractive, like the *commons* of fishing or communal irrigation systems).

The notion of the *common* (comum) that will be developed in this work could perhaps serve as a good translation (in Portuguese) for this notion of *commons*, since thereby it also accepts a good expansion of its senses, and goes well beyond the strictly eco-socio-economic approach. Our specific field of practices, pertaining to the topics of the *care of life* and of the *health-value*, lead us to other approaches of the commons, to other authors, which considerably enlarge the problematic field of this concept.

## The problem (of the perception) of the common

The mere remembrance and enumeration of some of the material and immaterial assets that are necessarily shared (air, water, language, knowledge, emotions etc.) should already be sufficient to show that much of our world and our existence is founded in the common, but even so we live in a world and according to a mode of existence in which the perception of this common is critically overshadowed. As Hardt and Negri claim:

With the blinders of today's dominant ideologies, however, it is difficult to see the common, even though it is all around us. Neoliberal government policies throughout the world have sought in recent decades to privatize the common, making cultural products—for example, information, ideas, and even species of animals and plants—into private property (2009, p. 8).

For certain, the naturalization of privatizing logic contributes to the fact that our perception of the common has become considerably obliterated. Here is a current example that expresses this insensitivity:

If you imagine the classic, traditional cultivation techniques, how to read and write, being enclosed and privatized would be, of course, a scandal, but the use of the most important cultural techniques for the twenty-first century (software use), this is happening and does not cause a public scandal (Helfrich, 2012, p. 48).

What is more alarming in the midst of the

privatizing fury of our neoliberal times is precisely this trivialization, the naturalization *process of the disappropriation of our necessary common resources*. Yes, because “[...] enclosure is much more than privatization. It implies disappropriation, rights privation, disempowerment, fragmentation, commodification and polarization - where both the market and the state contribute to the enclosure processes” (Helfrich, 2012, p. 46).

With these brief considerations we just want to indicate that the problem of the common implies, moreover, that there is a problem of perception of the common, that places us an extraordinary political challenge toward the plan of the sensitivity (challenges that, perhaps, put themselves in a privileged way for the art and the clinic, but not only these). After all, it must be very critical the state of those who became indifferent to the disappropriation of their collective power, considering natural that it can be expropriated and exploited by some.

## The problem (of the production) of the common

This eclipse of the common in the perception of this field does not diminish its influence and real requirements. The problem of the common require, permanently, a real solution in/of life, regardless of realizing it or not, because it is, strictly, a problem posed by life, especially when this common (i.e., what must necessarily be shared) is, in large part, our existing condition.

Here, as

[...] in Bergson, the very notion of a problem has its roots beyond history, in life itself or in the *élan vital*: life is essentially determined in the act of avoiding obstacles, stating and solving a problem. The construction of the organism is both the stating of a problem and a solution (Deleuze, 1999, p. 10).

It is in this “Bergsonist” sense of problem, that is, while a vital problem, it is postulated here a *problem of the common*.

So it was stated that the dominant privatizing ideology and the eclipse of the common does not changed the fact that all that exists is something that resists all attempts to “appropriation” and that

only with some violence can it be made “property,” whether private or public, something that can only be shared; that can only be if shared.

In addition, what emerges from the very title of this essay, it is also assumed that this common is something produced. Something that results of a productive activity - whether we take the common wealth socially produced (that would result from work, understood as a human ontocreative activity: activity of self and the world inventions, as we shall see later), or we consider the common wealth presented as a natural given (resulting from a “production of life”). In short, what is postulated is that the *problem of the production of the common* is a problem posed by life and even when this production is taken in a level of social production it remains a problem and solution posed by life. Therefore, in the perspective here adopted, it will not fit any separation between *vital production* and *social production*, assuming that the latter is a special case of the first.

In order to better understand in what way the *production of the common* becomes a vital problem, we need to examine with special attention the **ontological dimension** of the problem.

## The ontological dimension

This dimension of the production of the common deserves special attention because all of the other dimensions are considered perfectly correlated. And if we call this dimension of the production of the common ontological, it is because our basic reference on this issue is the ontology of Spinoza (2007), that is, his theory of being. More exactly, the point of support will be his *theory of individuality*, according to the readings of Deleuze (2009), which shows us, in a very alive and precise way, the spinozian definition of a *singular thing*, but also the concept of a *universal agnostic of singular things*, as well as the possible passage to the *knowledge of the relationships* and the *art of composition*.

“For singular things [Spinoza understands] those things which are finite and have a determined existence” (Spinoza, 2007, p. 81). This definition applies to all finite modes of existence, it is a finite mode of thought (like an affection, an idea or a mind), and it is a finite mode of extension (a human or non-human

body, animate or inanimate): “[...] we do not feel or perceive any other singular thing besides the bodies and the modes of thinking” (Spinoza, 2007, p. 81).

For didactical purposes, I take mainly the bodies as examples, the finite modes of extension (the modifications of the unique and infinite substance while *res extensa*, something consisting of outer parts put together) and make a brief initial synthesis of the spinozian *theory of individuality* as offered by Deleuze (2009), which is, in short, that every singular thing is, above all, one thing composed, composed of “[...] a multitude of infinite sets of extensive or exterior parts to each other” (p. 240), which defines the *first dimension of individuality*. However, what makes the uniqueness of every singular thing are not the parts that compose it and belong to it, but the relationship that submit these parts, that is, the fact that these parts belong under characteristic relationships: relationships of motion and rest between these parts which are effectively what characterize the singularity of anything and define the *second dimension of individuality*. Thus, every body, but also every idea, every mind, every singular thing is defined as a set of relationships and it is these characteristics that define its singularity. Finally, Spinoza demonstrates that “[...] these characteristic relationships do no more than express a degree of power that is (...) a singular essence [...]” (p. 240), which corresponds to the *third dimension of individuality*.

Let us exercise a little more this mode of understanding of what is a singular thing, of what is a body, appreciating the words of Deleuze in the passages that follow. They have the expressive virtues of orality (they are extracts of recorded and transcribed classes), in which in the flow can be heard the beauty of a barbaric language, spinozian. Therefore: **What is to born?**

What is it to pass into existence? (...) I say I pass into existence when a multitude of extensive parts is determined from the outside, in other words, by the shocks with other extensive parts, to enter into a relationship that characterizes me. So before, I did not exist, as I did not have these extensive parts. To be born is this. I was born when a multitude of extensive parts is determined from outside in the encounter with others, entering into a relationship



that is mine, that characterizes me. At this point, I have a relationship with a certain time and place. [...] time of my birth and place of my birth (...) [This] here and now, is what? It is the system of extensive parts. (...) The extensive parts are determined from the outside to come out in such a relationship that characterizes me, but for how long? Until they are determined to enter into another relationship. At this point, they go to another body, not belonging to me anymore (Deleuze, 2009, p. 252-253).

**And what is to die?** “To die, that is to say only one thing: that the parts that belong to me as such and such a relationship are determined from the outside to enter into a different relationship that does not characterize me, but that characterizes another thing” (p. 244.). Hence, Spinoza says that death comes always from the outside: “There is no death that is not accidental. Old age also comes from outside. All of this comes from the outside. It is **the detrition of the outer parts**” (Deleuze, p. 271, bold added). **And what is the duration of a life?** “It is the time during which the extensive parts, under this relationship that characterizes me, belong to me. Good. But what makes these extensive parts belong to me and stop belonging to me, all of this is under the control of extrinsic accidents. Simply, it is evident that extrinsic accidents have laws [...]” (Deleuze, p. 272). It is clear that our “extrinsic accidents” have “laws”, since the average life of an animal species, or any other form of life, turns out to be well determined. These average durations mean only that “[...] there are global durations, statistics durations that mark the time in which the extensive parts belong to this essence” (Deleuze, p. 271).

We have, then, that the ontology of Spinoza and his theory of individuality lead us to this interesting concept of the existence of a singular thing and the time it may last, what the philosopher indicates to be entirely dependent on “extrinsic accidents.” In this perspective, the significant increase in the average length of human life that has occurred in the last two centuries, following the process of urbanization and industrialization of societies, it can only be understood as a result of profound transformations that would have been given into our relationships with “extrinsic accidents.” But this is not the discussion that we will have now, although it could

be an interesting exercise to rethink core issues in the health field under the lenses of Spinoza’s ontology. At this point, the goal is to focus on achieving a clear understanding of what is a singular thing, as this is the first step in understanding what is the ontological dimension of the production of the common. And the starting point is this basic understanding that every singular thing, every body, is already a compound of parts (a collective) and that its singular characteristics are given by the relationships that submit these parts (every body is a set of relationships) and expresses the degree of power of this body (is its singular essence).

This is a very abstract definition of the body (which applies, in fact, to any singular thing), but that may, momentarily, prove very useful to show how **the production of the common is a part of the productive dynamics of being** and in this sense (cor)responds to a vital problem. So, let us see: What is my body? What is the body of the person writing these lines? This is a set of extensive parts in a given relationship which characterizes me. And what characterizes the body of the reader? Equally, it is a set of extensive parts in a given relationship which is what characterizes it. Similarly, we can ask ourselves what is a liver? A liver is an extensive collection of parts in a given relationships which is characterizing of the liver. And what is a cancer, a liver cancer? It is when a set of extensive parts that was under the liver-relationship, liver-composition, leaves the liver-relationship to enter a new relationship, which breaks the liver-relationship, which breaks down organization of the organ and, eventually, of the whole organism.

Following along these lines we can still ask: what is an ox? An ox is a set of extensive parts in a given relationship characterizing the ox. And what is a steak? We already know: a set of extensive parts in a given relationship characterizing the steak. How can the ox pass to the steak? Arguably, by causing the extensive parts of the ox to leave the ox-relationship to enter into the steak-relationship; in this way, we could go on indefinitely...

But, let us look at another aspect: being already sufficiently clear that the singular essence of a body (its degree of power) is defined by the characteristic relationships that submit its parts, we can increase

the complexity and, now, consider situations where bodies which are relationships, come into relationship with other bodies, establishing, therefore, relationships between relationships. Relationships between different characteristic relationships, and relationships between different degrees of power.

Let us return to the previous example: what is to eat a steak? It is the extraction of the extensive parts of the steak-relationship and then submitting them to the relationship of the one who eats.

I do not cease to integrate the parts in my relationships; when I eat, for example, there are extensive parts I appropriate. What does it mean to say take ownership of the parts? Taking ownership of the parts, I mean to say: to leave the previous relationship that they effectuated to have a new relationship and this new relationship is one of my relationships, namely, with the flesh, I make my flesh. What a horror! [laughs] Anyway, you must know how to live, that remains so. Shocks, appropriations of the parts, the transformations of relations, the compositions to infinity etc. (Deleuze, 2009, p. 242-243).

In this scenario, every singular thing seeks to subordinate the outer parts to their relationship, while “striving to persevere in existence” (the spinozian *conatus*), preventing its characteristic relationships from decomposing and that the parts belonging to it would then make the characteristic relationship of other natural things. We have, then, a kind of **universal agonistic of singular things**, which is expressed in a game of oppositions between the bodies, a game in which the possibility of producing a more powerful body is given by the ability of the body to establish relationships of composition with other bodies and avoid relationships that may decompose its characteristic relationships.

Early in the fourth part of the *Ethics* (entitled “Human servitude or the strength of the emotions”), Spinoza states the following axiom: “There is not, in the nature of things, a singular thing for which there is no other more powerful and stronger. Given any one thing, there is another, more potent, whereby the first can be destroyed” (2007, p. 269). Deleuze notes the character quite disconcerting of this “axiom of destruction” which only deserves greater clarification of Spinoza in a brief scholium of proposition

37 of the fifth part, almost in the last lines of *Ethics*, when, finally, it is clear that this axiom is only “[...] concerning singular things, as considered with respect to a certain time and place” (p. 403). That is, when considering things as existing:

It is only to the extent that individuals are considered to exist here and now that they can enter into opposition. This is not a matter of goodness or wickedness; it is a matter of logical possibility. I can only have relationships of opposition with another individual because of something; because of what? Because of the extensive parts that compose us, that belong to us (Deleuze, 2009, p. 253).

This is, strictly speaking, the first mode of human existence (a way to live entirely related to the first dimension of individuality), in which the relationship of our bodies with the externality, with other bodies, takes the form of opposition (returning to the subject of the perception of the common, it can be said that it is a mode of existence that certainly this perception is critically overshadowed). This is the most common human mode of existence: the more so because “[...] the experience of the obstacle and the limit (is) the first experience - and continuing - the whole existence” (Bove, 1996, p. 12), especially when the common experience is the constant threat of decomposition by other more powerful bodies, when we have to strive continually to persevere in existence.

But we may also experience other more powerful modes of existence, because our bodies need and are also able to provide other types of connection with the external, which may be a composing relationship and thus power production, since “[...] the human body needs to be preserved, many other bodies, by which it is continuously regenerated” (Spinoza, 2007, p. 105). It is in the “[...] shocks, (in) the appropriation of the parts, (in) the transformation of relationships, (in) the compositions to the infinity, etc.” (Deleuze, 2009, p. 243) that the human body can learn to set up relationships with other bodies and to avoid relationships that may destroy it.

Let us return to the examples, up some more stairs on the complexity of the relationship problem between singular things, asking: What is a wave? It is a set of extensive parts in a given relationship that

characterizes the wave. The wave, certainly, fills the criteria of a singular thing, a finite thing of its kind, an individual, an individuated form that stands out on the ocean surface, clearly identifiable on any seaside. It turns out that this singular thing, the wave, has certain characteristics that make it very clear the limitations of our more abstract definition of the body. Only a photo of the wave would be a set of extensive parts in a given relationship which would characterize it, because the next moment it was already characterized by a new relationship, and another and another and another ... until all the extensive parts that belonged to it, while it lasted this succession of variations in its characteristic relationships, ceased to belong to it, being absorbed by other relationships, in other compositions, and other singular essences (degrees of power).

The question arises, then: What is it to “catch a wave”? This is properly the problem of the surfer, or the problem created by the surfer. A problem that requires us to refine our definition of a body, especially a human body: as the wave, it is a set of extensive parts, not only under a given relationship, but under a certain spectrum of possible relationships, which can be varied while characterizing that body. Thus: the wave is a body, a set of variable relationships of a certain duration; the surfer is another body, a set of relationships that he will need to know to vary in such a way to establish a composition relationship with the wave that lasts as long as possible. The possibility of a body establishing composition relationships with other bodies depends on their degree of ability to join these other bodies in relationships that compose with the relationships that characterize them. Or, to put it another way, it depends on their degree of ability to **produce common** or to **make a community** with these other bodies. The surfer is the one who knows how to make a community with the wave. Surfing is the art of producing common with the waves: it is an **art of composition**. And this art is a type of knowledge that is fully embodied. There is not a reflective distance to decide which relationship to take to compose with the wave. The body just knows. Immediate knowledge of the degree of power, form of existence entirely referred to the third dimension of individuality. But, at the same time, the practice does not exclude the exer-

cise of prudence, avoiding the powers with which we cannot compose. The surfer must always know what waves he can catch...

At this point, the famous spinozian question makes all the senses: what can a body? It is evident that what can a body, the power of a body, is something that, essentially, depends on their ability to vary its characteristic relations to expand their possibilities of composing with other bodies, its power to affect and be affected. This evidence could unfold in a number of very interesting practical issues (ethical-political), dramatically posed in the health field, taking into account all the modifications (artifices) that we can produce in our bodies, all the ways in which it can vary its characteristic relations, in order to increase its power, and will go to the point of asking how much a body can vary their relations and continue to be the same body. We will, however, now stick to our main objective of highlighting the ontological dimension of the production of the common, and show how it is something that should be given necessarily, as the bodies, to the extent that it does not entirely succumb under the weight of “external causes,” always want to can more and never the other way around, and the **production of the common** is nothing more than a way, referred to finite things determined from outside, by which it gives the **production of power** (power of life, strength to exist, power of acting and thinking), which can be translated, in terms of a problem exclusively placed for humans, as the **production of joy**, of **adequate ideas** and **virtuous actions**. Hardt (1996, p. 155-157) summarizes as well, experimenting augmentative affects of power, i.e.

The experience of joy is the spark that sets in motion the ethical progression. (...) The process starts with the experience of joy. This encounter by chance with a compatible body allows us, or leads us to recognize a common relationship. (...) The common notions is the set of two compositional relationships to create a new, more powerful relation, a new and more powerful body.

To continue to advance the understanding of this problem, we must also consider it in its other dimensions, properly human, such as the *cognitive-affective dimension*, the *work* and the *ethical-political*.



## The cognitive-affective dimension

Deleuze (2009) teaches us that the hallmark of the spinozian way of thinking is to have designed an ethic that is the perfect correlative of his ontology. More broadly, it can be said that Spinoza conceived not only an ethics, but also a theory of knowledge and affections, as well as an ethical-political thought (and hence a praxis), which is a perfect correlate to his ontological conception. So in all of these dimensions, the big spinozian question is always how to achieve the **knowledge of relationships** and an **art of composition**: an art of **making community** or an art of the **production of the common**.

In the aforementioned courses on Spinoza, Deleuze points out the close correspondence between the three dimensions of individuality and the three kinds of knowledge. In this sense,

[...] system of the external parts one to each other, that do not cease to react at the same time as the infinite sets in them, they do not cease to vary, it is precisely this system of inadequate ideas, confused perceptions and liable affections, of passion-affections arising therefrom. In other words, it is because I am composed of a set, of a multitude of infinite sets of extensive parts outer one to each other, that I do not cease to have perceptions of external things, perceptions of myself, perceptions of myself in my relationship with things outside, perceptions of external things about myself; and all of this is what constitutes the world of signs (p. 243).

A world of images, imagination and passive life.

It should be noted the duplicity of signs, which are always at the same time “scalar” and “vector” (Deleuze, 1997). That is, a sign is an effect, a brand, an image caused by another body on my body (or in spinozian terms, an affection - *affectio*) and simultaneously a “charge”, a “value” glued to this sign which stems from its effects on the duration of my body, experienced as variation of my power, my strength to exist (or, simply, an affect - *affectus*). All signs being, inseparably, affection and affect, they correspond to the augmentative affects of power (good or happy signs) and to the diminutive affects of power (bad or sad signs); and what would be a good sign? It simply means that “[...] I find external parts

who agree with my own parts in their relationship. Bad, I find, external parts which do not fit with me in the relationship under which they are” (Deleuze, 2009, p. 243). And so is characterized, for Spinoza, the unstable cognitive-affective life in this first kind of knowledge, to which we are, in principle, condemned, since we partake necessarily of the system of extensive parts that defines the first dimension of individuality.

However, as we have seen, we have the power to achieve a second mode of existence and therefore a second kind of knowledge: “[...] the knowledge of the relationships that composes me and relationships that composes the other things” (Deleuze, 2009, p. 245). It is no longer only the knowledge of the effects of the meeting between the parts, but the knowledge of relationships, that is, it is the mode by which my characteristic relationships compose with other relationships and decompose or are decomposed by many others.

Before learning to surf (knowledge of the third kind) one must learn to swim; and this is the example chosen by Deleuze to explain what it means to overcome the inadequate knowledge (of the first kind) toward the adequate knowledge (second kind). Learning to swim: a genuine existential achievement, the achievement of an element! But think, first, what it means **not to swim**.

Quite simply, not knowing how to swim is to be at the mercy of the meetings with the wave. [...] We see well that are extrinsic relationships: sometimes the wave strikes me, sometimes the wave drags me; these are shock effects. These shock effects are, namely: I know nothing about the reality of the relationship, what composes or decomposes, I just receive the effects of the extrinsic parts. The parts that belong to me are shaken, they receive the shock effects of the parts belonging to the wave. Therefore, now I laugh and sometimes I whimper as the wave makes me laugh or slaps me, I am in the passion-affections. (p.246-7).

On the contrary, if **I know how to swim**: (...) it means that I have the know-how, an amazing know-how, that is, I have a kind of sense of rhythm, the rhythm [rythmicité]. What does this mean, the rhythm? What I mean to say: my characteristic relation-

ships, I know how to compose them directly with the relationship of the wave. It does not pass between the wave and I, that is, it does not pass but between the extensive parts, the wet parts of the wave and the parts of my body; it passes between these relationships. The relationships that make up the wave, the relationships that make up my body and my ability when I know how to swim, to present my body in the relationships that make up directly with the wave relationship. I dive at the right time, I go out at the right time. I avoid the oncoming wave or, on the contrary, I serve it to me etc.... The whole **art of composition of relationships** (p. 247-248, bold added).

Learn to swim, learn to surf, learn to fly, to conquer different elements. Learning to dance with other bodies, learn to play as a team, learning to talk, conquer the art of conversation and building powerful relationships with other humans, learn how to present himself to others under compositional relationships. Learning and achievements that involve the challenge of the production of the common in the cognitive-affective dimension. Continuing with Deleuze, "It is the same thing at the level of the loves. The waves or the loves are the same. A love of the first kind, well, you are perpetually in this system of encounters between the extrinsic parts" (Deleuze, 2009, p. 248). But a love of second kind

[...] you are no longer in the system of inadequate ideas, namely: the effect of a part over mine, the effect of an outer part or the effect of an external body over mine. There you will reach a deeper domain, which is the composition of the characteristic relationship of a body with the characteristic relationship of another body. And this kind of flexibility or rhythm that is when you present your body, and then your soul too, you have your soul or your body in a relationship that composes as directly as possible with the relationship of the other. You feel that is a strange happiness. There it is, this is the second kind of knowledge (p. 248).

And there is a third kind of knowledge, because the relationships are not essences yet. The third kind of knowledge is "[...] what goes beyond relationships and their compositions and decompositions. It is

the knowledge of essences, which goes further than the relationship, the essence of which relationships depend" (Deleuze, 2009, p. 249). Recall the surfer and the wave: this is the knowledge that the surfer has of the wave that allows him to make a community with the wave. Being the very surfer a singular essence, a degree of power, this is the immediate knowledge that this degree of power has of himself and of the other degrees of power. This is the knowledge of the third dimension of individuality.

What does it mean, again, this coincidence between "kinds of knowledge" and "dimensions of individuality"?

It means that the kinds of knowledge are more than kinds of knowledge, they are the **modes of existence?** They are ways of living. But why are they ways of living? (...) This is where you will find one last problem. (...) This is exactly the problem: each individual has three dimensions (of individuality) at the same time, however, there are individuals who will not leave the first kind of knowledge. They do not come to rise to the second or third (p. 249, bold added).

At this point, the problem of the production of the common presents itself as properly human and we can discern, clearly, how it arises as a problem specifically for men: as cognitive-affective and ethical-political challenges; because it is not absolutely a given that men can get out of the first kind of knowledge and conquer other more powerful modes of existence, and yet, it is a given that they have, like any other singular bodies, the three dimensions of individuality simultaneously. Thus, the problem of the production of the common for men arises primarily as cognitive-affective and ethical-political one, which is to say that it is precisely these dimensions (intellectual and collective) that allow men has the possibility of expanding its power of acting and thinking.

This spinozian pathway - that links ethics to ontology, freedom to the knowledge of what exists necessarily - defines the unique place occupied by this political philosophy in the history of Western thought, a way of thinking that does not oppose civil rights to natural rights (via characteristically Hobbesian), but believes the civil rights as expan-

sion of natural rights: in the state of nature man is more helpless than in civil state, because the city is exactly what **results from the effort of composition between the bodies, the effort of the production of the common**, becoming, in the same act, the **condition of this production**.

But before we slip from the cognitive-affective dimensions to the ethical-political dimensions of the production of the common, we will take a brief shortcut open by some possibilities of thinking **health and health work** in this perspective.

## Health

Considering the ontological and cognitive-affective dimensions in their inseparability, we already have a first opportunity to think about health: (1) in an **axiological perspective**, health as a **value** (affect) indicates the status of internal and external relationships of bodies that correspond to the fuller understanding of their degrees of power (singular essences), or even, which would correspond to **the growth of being** or, in ethical-political terms, the expansion of their rights. Knowing, by the above, what promotes a shift to a greater degree of power of the bodies, we understand the **centrality of the problem of the production of the common in the production of health**. Health as a state of internal and external relationships of bodies that correspond to the transition to a higher degree of power, i.e., a greater “effort to persevere in existence” (an increase in strength of the *conatus*), would be the result of the production of the common while a problem and a solution posed by life.

This concept of health has already been developed elsewhere (Teixeira, 2004), where the centrality of problem of the production of the common in the production of health has been much discussed. Here we highlight how to take the issue of health by the *conatus* perspective (that is, the view that every body resists destruction by stronger external causes) makes the problem even more interesting! As we have seen, every existing thing can be destroyed by a stronger thing, so that one can say “[...] the experience of the obstacle and the limit is the first experience - and continuing - of all existence” (Bove 1996, p. 12). In this sense, the central importance

of the notion of the *conatus* (effort) in spinozian thought indicates an acknowledgment of the primal character of **resistance** in the experience of all that exists: to strive to continue to exist against all competing to take this life. Resistance, however, that is not passive, but **active-resistance** (Bove, 1996), since the **effort** is actualized on strategies to not only preserve the existence, but to expand the force to exist. Resist the “detrition of the external parts” and death, not just surviving, but producing life; resisting decomposition, producing new compositions. More precisely, we live in a continuous game of balanced proportions between compositions and decompositions, whose goal is to get the right dose. This is the “*conatus*” strategy (Bove, 1996), which can be said to be a kind of generalized strategy of “harm reduction”, enhanced by the idea that this “reduction” reflects only a more favorable outcome in the game of proportionalities between compositions and the decomposition - which can lead us to reframe (and possibly rename) the “harm reduction” as an “art of doses.” For this reason, we believe that the strategy of harm reduction in health when seen in this broader perspective, can be much more than a strategy for dealing with some specific conditions, but is placed virtually as another paradigm for thinking all the health practices, all the practices of life care. This is undoubtedly another philosophy of care, whose main virtue, from the point of view adopted here, is present as a **practice of care allied of the strategies of life**.

This possibility of a care practice with life allied of the strategies of life produces a kind of fold, which makes it explicit about how humans can participate in the vital production. This is a good question to resume the continuity, pointed out above, between social production and the vital production and opens up a second possibility of thinking about health: (2) in an **factitious perspective**, the production of health is also expressed as a social production, in other words, health is also the result of our inventive and industrious actions, which could have no other guidance than the production of the common.

Health (or the Great Health, as sometimes is preferable name it to mark its difference with usual conceptions), while a state of internal and external relationships of bodies correlated to the passage to

a higher level of power, that is, to a greater “effort to persevere in existence” or even a higher power to affect and be affected and thus establish compositional relationships with other bodies, corresponding ultimately, considering everything we have seen so far, the possibility of production of the common and would result from the production of the common; which is a problem posed by life, that is, which follows a vital imperative. And, as it has been said before, nothing changes if health production is seen as social production, if health is also thought of as a result of human labor: this action also sits on the common it produces.

Indeed, this dimension of the production of the common problem deserves to be highlighted, if only to talk quickly about some of the reasons for its importance. If work can be defined as a **ontocre-ative human activity** (the activity of invention of the self and the world) it is precisely because in few dimensions of contemporary life the production of the common is seen as greater importance as in the **dimension of work**.

## The dimension of work

This dimension of the production of the common sends us back, in a way, to the plane in which the problem of the common was introduced at the beginning of this essay: the plan of resources (natural and productive) shared (*commons*), plan in which the ecology and the economy, the species and the society, after the turn of the spinozian ontology, they can become part of the bioeconomy and biopolitics (Lazzarato, 2008).

Here, the main references are Negri (2001) and Hardt and Negri (2004; 2009), whose uniqueness in their position in the debate of the commons is precisely to consider the **production of the common as immanent in the organization of contemporary work**. For these and other authors (Lazzarato and Negri, 2001; Zarifian, 2007; Virno, 2013), the production of the common is a central attribute of post-Fordist work, understood primarily as **immaterial work**, producing work of intangible assets such as knowledge, emotions, relationships, forms of communication, and forms of life. Therefore, cognitive-affective and biopolitical work, of which the **health**

**work** can be considered an exemplary case.

As stated by Negri (2001, p. 26): “The worker, today, no longer needs work tools (i.e. fixed capital) that were given to them by the capital. The most important fixed capital that determines the productivity differentials now is in the brain of people working: it is the machine-tool that each of us carries within itself.” In the same work, the author continues:

The work is constructed, therefore, from the tools that were embodied, but this incarnation understands life. Through the tool appropriation is life itself that is put into production. And put life into production means essentially put into production the communication elements of life. An individual life could not be productive. The individual life becomes productive - and intensely productive - because it starts communicating with other bodies, with other embodied tools. But if all this is true, then language, as the fundamental form of cooperation and production, becomes central in this process. It occurs that language, like the brain, is connected to the body and the body is not simply expressed by forms or pseudo-rational or by images: it is also expressed through the powers, the powers of life, we call affects. The affective life becomes, therefore, one of the expressions of the incarnate working tool within the body (p. 28).

In this dense and synthetic passage, Negri shows us how the embodiment of the machine-tool (since productivity differentials are increasingly in the brain) makes life the primary productive force, but highlighting two key points: (1) (individual) life only becomes really productive when “enter into communication”, when is “common life” (Pelbart, 2003); (2) the affective life integrates the production process, since language, as much as the “brain network”, is always connected to the body and thus expresses itself not only as images, affections, “scalar signs”, but also as “vector signs”, affects, and power of life. In short, says the author, “[...] it is the cognitive and affective vitality that is requested and put to work. What is required of each is its force of invention, and the invention-force of the brain network has become, in the current economy, the main source of value”(p. 24).

There is no room at this time, to give even a short historical account of the process by which immaterial work has become hegemonic at this stage of the productive forces (which we think a deepening understanding can be performed with the aid of the works and authors in the above-cited references to the subject). We start from the evidence that the production of immaterial wealth (knowledge, affects, relationships, forms of life) has become the main driving force and source of value of contemporary capitalism. This is a type of value entirely different from that related to material goods, since these, by wear, by the “detrition of the external parts”, lose value as they circulate, while the value of intangible assets whose consumption is not subtractive, increases the more they are used, increases with their movement, with their **communication**. They are **values-affects**, which indicate passages in the variation of the powers of life, corresponding to the production of modes of existence, of forms of life. Production that

[...]depends on the boundless of life supplements that are the result of the mixing of work time and free time. The main source of value lies therefore in the social combination of the know-how of living work, and no more in the combination (wage work) of fixed capital and repetitive work and depersonalized execution. [...] **Work in this context means producing “supplements” of life**, that is, producing subjectivity: meaning and knowledge, relation and judgment, culture and nature. [In this sense the] worker is not just that one who is within the wage relation, but is also widespread in all social networks in metropolitan areas, in the production and reproduction activities (Cocco, 2011, bolds added).

After all, it is very difficult to exclude someone of what is truly common, of what must necessarily be shared, of what results from the production of each and every one. Thus, the work that produces immaterial wealth is far from being reduced to employment, since the unemployed, informal and illegal workers are known to produce more wealth than employees. In general, it is this entire diffuse workforce, employed or not, that the capital, in this neoliberal internal revolution, explores, appropriating privately of the common wealth that it produces.

On the other hand, we have a paradoxical situation in which the work has become effectively “free”, in which work was emancipated from the discipline of the factory, just by becoming immaterial, intellectual and emotional. In this context, although the capital has been able to anticipate “[...] forms of productive cooperation and the political ‘power’ of these [...]”, no longer has the ability to “[...] master unilaterally the structure of the work process by the division between manual and intellectual labor” (Negri, 2001, p. 26-27).

Therefore, it seems appropriate to us to define work as an **ontocreative human activity**: activity of inventing itself and the world. A job that invents relationships, forms of life, forms of subjectivity. A work that continually furthers calls for the subjectivity of the worker, his initiative, his inventiveness in action. Zarifian (2007) speaks of a “work of creative engagement” in which the ethical challenges of relational work would place the worker permanently on the job to “start a world.” But, according to the idea that a life only becomes productive when it comes into communication with other lives, we have that a work that permanently requires an “initiative”, demands, in turn, the formation of a “community of creative engagement”. This could entail practice in setting up some kind of “network of brains” for the exchange of ethical ideas. It can be easily seen as this characterization of contemporary work is perfectly suited to health work without any adaptation and therefore we can say, symmetrically, the network-building challenge in health is much greater than simply ensure the “system integration” or the “coordination of care.” It also, for example, has the challenge of producing collaborative and social networks for exchange of ethical opinions between workers, managers and users of health services. Another author who also highlights the inventive skills required of the immaterial worker is Virno (2013), who compares its activity to a “performing artist”, talking about “virtuosic work.” Cocco (2011), relying on these Virno ideas, he makes a good summary:

The immaterial work - communicative, cognitive, affective - takes the form of virtuous execution whose product is fully relational and inseparable from its production process. The score that the virtuosic workers perform is the general intellect:



the level of education, knowledge, cooperation that characterizes the networks and territories, particularly those designed for metropolitan networks.

Again, we approach to very interesting questions that can open up important analytical perspectives of the work and of the political struggles for health, but we will stick to those aspects related to our main topic: the production of the common. And one of the things that is most evident when examining the production of the common problem in the dimension of work is its dual implication: **the common is, at the same time, the product and the conditions of production** (exactly as stated above regarding the role of knowledge or the city, among many other commons). The immaterial work continuously produces the relationship, cooperation, that is, the conditions under which work produces and reproduces.

We shall return to the examples, now extracted from contemporary life: the common (the city, both in its physical and virtual reality) is the factory of immaterial work (metropolitan work), its space of production par excellence. So it is possible, for example, to understand the Movement for Free Pass - which was the trigger of the days of political demonstrations that erupted across Brazil from June 2013 - as a struggle for the right to the city, as an authentic “fight for the common”, proposing a “politics of the common”! As an authentic struggle of the “metropolitan worker” against the “enclosures”, the “turnstileizations”, and the “privatizations” of the common productive resources, in this case represented by the possibility of urban mobility. That is why we can see a significant change in social struggles related to the question of public services such as transport or health, which are not limited only to the causes of public service workers, but include those who advocate “[...] the public nature - i.e., communitarian and collective - of all services, since they became the production conditions, and therefore the condition of everyone’s life. Services should therefore be returned to life, to ‘biopolitical’” (Negri, 2011, p. 44).

It seems to me this is exactly what it is: restoring health services to life! What other service could be “the production conditions, and therefore the condition of everyone’s life”, more than the health services? I understand that put up against all forms

of privatization of the **life care** is put up against any form of expropriation of this “power of the common” that is health, which is to produce health; is, ultimately, put up against any form of enclosure of this perfect commons which is life, against any form of “ownership” that implies to “[...] reduce the capacity of people to enjoy the wealth, deflate the common [...]”, when our **health problem** is entirely another, an issue where, on the contrary, “[...] the charge toward inflation, towards an inflation of new desires, (it would be) fundamental” (Negri, 2011, p. 44)!

This kind of biopolitical production may result from the activity of any worker, employed or not, who participates in the social production of health. Work in which the common is at the same time, the product and the production conditions (knowledge, emotions, communication, cooperation, power, health). Work, finally, where all of these biopolitical implications make up another dimension of the production of the common it stands out: the ethical-political. Just remember that every structure of cooperation can also be a structure of control and command. The language and social networks, for example, are conditions for the production of the common (of **communication**, of **community**) and, in this way, in order to magnify the power of life, as well as these are the structures by which the slogans are spread and the mechanisms of control and subjection. For this reason, the dimension of work is perhaps the one that best expresses the great ethical-political challenge posed to the problem stated here: **that the common should make up a public sphere.**

## The ethical-political dimension

Hence, if this work came from the central argument that there is a problem of the common that cannot be reduced to the public (State) as the only alternative to the private, in the end, it points out that this is a most urgent task, precisely the common makes up a public sphere, without which, as warns Virno (2013, p. 24), he “[...] dementedly multiplies the submission forms”. The common, which in the post-Fordism appears as a mere productive resource (in the forms of collective intelligence and all figures of cooperation)

should also be stated as a constitutional principle of a public sphere (non-State). Therefore, it is necessary that every **community** is **political**. And that all contemporary forms of struggle for the common, of common production, are impregnated by **an ethics of democratic political action**.

The big question is: How? How can do the **common** to constitute itself into a **political community**? I do not want to answer this question in the last lines of this text, but to shut it down with an encouraging to political imagination, selecting some Hardt and Negri fragments that make up a short analysis of the legal structures of the republican State, highlighting the importance of building up a legal framework that allows “multitude” (the “cooperating singularities”) to have control of the common:

We need to identify the way in which the common is politically constructed in the contemporary world. How the cooperating singularities can exercise control over the common and how this control can find legal representation? We will have to confront the legal frameworks established and the neo-liberal regimes to which opposes the movements of the multitude. It is on these legal frameworks that lays up the privatization project of public goods (as water, air, land and all living management systems, as well as the care and retirement systems, which have become all state-owned at the time of the welfare state) and, above all, public services (telecommunications and other network infrastructure, postal services, public transport, energy supply, education). One must remember that such goods or public services, placed in the hands of the nation-state, constituted the very basis of modern sovereignty. How can we oppose the privatization of common goods and services without falling into the old opposition between public and private? (Hardt, Negri, 2004, p 243.)

When we endeavor to develop a legal conception of the common to oppose both the public and the private, we are not going to, in any way, we stick to tradition and to the constituents experiences of Jacobinism and socialism, as they were developed in the nineteenth and twentieth. The modern concept of disciplinary and patrimonial state (that has developed within the monarchical absolutism) re-

sulted entirely in the forms and legal structures of the republican State, both in their versions Jacobian and socialists. The public goods and public service notions developed, therefore, under the influence of a legal doctrine that makes the public domain the heritage of the State and the general interest, a sovereign attribute. The emergence of the concept of the common - (...) as a productive activity of singularities that make up the multitude - breaks the continuity of the sovereignty of the modern state and reaches to the heart of biopower, demystifying their sacred seat. (P. 244-245)

We must begin to imagine a strategy and an alternative legal framework: a private conception expressing the singularity of social subjectivities (not private property) and a public conception based on the common (and not on state control) - this is a post-liberal and post-socialist legal theory (p. 241).

## The love

This contribution therefore ends with the introduction of new problems. Issues that point to political and legal challenges as well as to micro-political challenges, which fall into the daily production of more powerful and democratic ways of life, through a collaborative work of social networks; problems that eventually allow the emergence of new sensitivities, new perceptions that denaturalize the privatizing logic and make up a scandal at any attempt to have exclusive appropriation (collective expropriation) of this that is the common. New sensibilities and perceptions that make patent the constituent power of this common and the struggles that are oriented in this direction are authentic political expressions of love; just as there is a continuous political expression of love that takes place in the metropolitan labor, in the cooperative social production. For Hardt and Negri (2009), these experiences of work and political struggle lead us to a “political concept of love”, recognized in the production of the common and the production of social life.

And we also realize that the political expressions of love in the everyday common micro-

production are spread across the metropolitan landscape, witnessing a possible resistance or emergence of a **sensibility to the common**, a sensibility that could not take as natural the privatization of health: the extra track that opens up spontaneously at the simple sound of the siren at any traffic jam in big cities to make way for an ambulance or other emergency vehicle. The common producing **necessarily** there where life demands: a free pass for life in the setting of urban mobility/immobility.

In these multidimensional scenarios of the production of the common two challenges seem key: first, we need to expand this sensibility to the common in health, placing the struggle for a free and universal public health system in the same perspective that puts the struggle for a free pass in metropolitan transport, so that this movement is actualized as a major contemporary form of struggle for the common, of production of the common; on the other hand, we must remember that the multitude who expresses itself in work and in contemporary struggles is also in the process of “becoming-Prince”: a process of “[...] learning the art of self-government, inventing democratic forms of lasting social organization” (Hardt, Negri, 2009, p. 8).

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