

## **BIO-POWER: A CRITIQUE OF "LEGITIMATE VIOLENCE"**

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**ABSTRACT.** The present research examines what forms violence has taken along rationalisation processes. To be able to work out this core, it is necessary to deal with the bio-power first. By analysing the development process of bio-power the Implementation of its disciplinary and regulatory technologies becomes apparent. On the basis of this the Altered forms of violence become clear within modern society. The impact this has had on modern society and the reason it became possible will be examined in detail in the following. Finally, it should be emphasised whether the term 'bio-power' is still relevant today. The aim of the present Paper is to determine the importance of 'violence' in today's life of modern societies and how violence is spread today.

**Key-words:** Bio-power, Violence, totalitarianism, surveillance, Terrorism

### **Introduction**

In order to understand violence nowadays, the present research examines how the concept of power has evolved since the processes of rationalisation and secularisation in Europe. The present concept of power or power conception become comprehended by considering the category of violence and its forms of change throughout time, since power can be understood only in relation to violence. This investigation will examine first the different transformation processes of power which modern society has undergone in the context of the historical processes - such as the rationalisation process. The rationalisation process is Characterised by secularisation and social differentiation<sup>1</sup>. As a result of these modernisation processes, the concept of violence too changed subsequently, as new forms of power and thus also relations of domination have occurred.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luhmann 1985.

On this basis, the ‘violent relations’ manifested in modern society in different social and political areas are set in connection with the concept of power. As it turns out, ‘power’ is above all based on an over-dominance in the sphere of the private sphere, i.e. is ‘omnipresent’ in the daily life and work of society members.

Secondly, it is examined why ‘power’ was able to penetrate into the ‘private sphere’ of the individuals and why it became ‘omnipresent’. Thus, questions about present-day violence and social ‘emancipation’ in modern society can be raised.

### **1. The monopoly on violence**

To understand the evolution of the concept of power towards a space of social and political violence, it is worth taking a closer look at the dictatorships of the 20th century. They show how political and economic violence could develop in a way that in which these could extend ‘power’ from public space to the private sphere. It examines how the concept of power has changed as a result of modern perceptions of violence. Furthermore, it shows what a momentous consequences this has for the ‘modern’ person. The investigation is based on the thesis that the ‘bureaucratisation of power’ was created by ‘rational violence’ using ‘knowledge’ as an instrument to legitimise totalitarian<sup>2</sup> rule relationships. A fitting theoretical basis for the modern concept of power is provided by Michel Foucault's approach, which coined the term bio-power or bio-politics. This bio-power uses the instruments of power such as disciplinary and regulatory techniques, these function as mechanisms of modern state apparatus that first ‘discipline’ and ‘sanitise’ the individual as a ‘body’ through various institutions, control and monitoring bodies. The goal was to become ‘sociable’ in order to be able to dedicate itself to the regulation of the population, which is treated as a species, organism and living beings. Other theoretical foundations are Hannah Arendt's works, which deal with concepts such as power, violence, total rule, and terror.

Arendt distinguishes the concept of power from that of violence through the fact that her ‘power’ means the ability to associate or connect and act with other people. It takes place wherever people ‘do something’ together or empower a person in their name (i.e. that of the group), while ‘violence’ is a means or instrument of domination. It occurs in the absence of ‘power’, that is, whenever there is “no political action”. Violence then occurs as an instrument

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: “From the very beginning, this term ‘totalitario’ meant something that stood in contrast to ‘total’ in a similar contrast as ‘revolutionised’ to ‘revolutionary’. That means that, “totalitarian” has to be understood as the process of the “toleration - unwillingness” claim enforcement of domination, the ability, therefore, at any time to establish the state of emergency inside or outside the law. This process of power over the superior power to omnipotence is “totalitarian”.

when, for example, 'political changes' take place, i.e when "anarchy-the absence of power" prevails. According to Arendt, violence is not legitimate in relation to power and can only implement its goals or relationships through "coercion", in order to bring about power or domination over someone. However, this must also be delineated in Weber's view of "violence" that derives from the "legitimate power or violence"<sup>3</sup> of the state which has "the monopoly of the legitmate use of physical force" and is a law-abiding force, since it upholds the "order" and therefore has and is able to have the 'ruling power' on its side and can be understood as 'uniform' - as a unity of power and violence. Thus, 'civil violence', that is, the violence of the people or of the citizens as parallelisation to the "legitimate violence" is considered 'forbidden violence' and is therfor called by Arendt "civil disobedience". Recent approaches, such as those of Marc Crépon speak nowadays of the "violence of the indignant"<sup>4</sup>, as it occurs, inter alia, through the anonymous movement.

Walter Benjamin's criticism of violence also refers to the "legitimate law-abiding force" which stands in contrast to the 'forbidden violence' and can be understood as a legal criticism and as a critique of the 'law-preserving and law-setting force' as 'law-setting violence'. Thus, 'civil violence' is ambiguous and therefore plural and can also be understood as the driving force from which each new political system emerged since this is about the violence that fights for the 'establishment of a new order'.

The paradox however is that 'violence' or tyranny possesses or exerts no 'power' per se, since power can exist of its own accord and only legitimacy is needed, while violence can only be implemented through the means of 'coercion'. According to Arendt, out of tyranny, the reign of terror can arise when it has eliminated all its enemies but continues to hold on to "power" by maintaining central control over the state apparatus. Unlike the dictatorship, it does not pursue the exclusion of an 'enemy' but the control of all areas of life, in which all members of society, even the supporters of the 'dictatorship' can be declared or 'denounced'. Arendt concludes that the "total rule" lives on the claim of a "total, so all areas of life comprehensive, radical transformation of society" and due "to an anxious terrorist regime only paralysis, stagnation, sometimes even retrogression 'remains' which she calls the "atomisation of society".<sup>5</sup>

The racial ideological attitudes and the resulting homogenisation and repression policies of the dictatorships of the twentieth century, which emerged

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<sup>3</sup> The interesting fact here is that in German the term is "legitimate Violence" - „legitime Gewalt" and not "power" in the sense of "Macht".

<sup>4</sup> Crépon/Worms 2015.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Kollmorgen 2006: 17. "The "hyper-politicisation" became - as H. Arendt put it early on - the "atomisation of society", that is to say, in the Arendtian sense a politically free system of rule (Arendt 1951/86)."

from the historical context of capitalist and imperialist developments, and as modernisation stages, represent an extremely important and defining factor for today's understanding of power and the changed 'power relations' Europe must be understood as. The investigation of the establishment of ideological, dictatorial and totalitarian rule practices in the modern societies of Europe serves the fundamental understanding of the bio-power/"bureaucratisation of power" by the force of 'technical rationality'. Technical rationality served the purposes of rational labor, social organisation and political power preservation by becoming the embodiment of various political ideologies, and is therefore the bearer of Europe's social modernisation process, which needs to be further explored in the context of the seizure of totalitarian regimes.

## 2. The rise of Bio-power

The "education" of modern man also included the sanitation of the late medieval cities and the people living in them, who were increasingly plagued by poverty and spreading diseases and epidemics due to the rapidly increasing urban populations. To counteract these problems,

The growing state power in the form of urban, territorial or national authorities tried to make the solution of the burning / acute poverty and begging problem an integral part of their good policy, since at that time policy did not designate any institution, but the good order of the community. It was all about forcing healthy beggars to work, if necessary with punishment, and to educate the beggar children to work in time.<sup>6</sup>

Out of this problem of order, penitentiaries and workhouses were built throughout Europe in the late 16th century. Their inmates were disciplined with beatings and violence and forced to work in meager catering. For example, men often used to grate tropical color wood (*Rasphuis*), women to weave or knit. One working day in the Pforzheim Penitentiary lasted from four in the morning to nine in the evening, with four approximately one-hour meal breaks, for a total of 13 hours, followed by a night's rest. Reinhard says that the importance of *discipline* obviously fluctuates between *education* and *castigation*, with the latter often contributing to the former, leaving only the castigation in modern criminal law. The penitentiary was after Reinhard in contrast to the prison a particularly hard and dishonorable prison sentence, which was abolished in Germany in 1969. According to Reinhard, the concentration camps of the SS were also imprisoned in this tradition, as the cynical slogan "*Arbeit macht frei*" ("Labor makes free")<sup>7</sup> reveals.

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<sup>6</sup> Reinhard 2006: 433.

<sup>7</sup> Reinhard 2006: 433.

Foucault, who has dealt more extensively with the topic of *workhouses*, describes in his book *Madness and Civilisation*, that since the Renaissance, the leprosores stood empty until the 17th century, until they were put back into use, and there 'internees' as formerly Leprosy patients were isolated from the rest of society, which also had political, social, religious, economic and moral meanings.<sup>8</sup> Especially as these hospices, internment, detention centers or penitentiaries were both ecclesiastical and public institutions: "the help and the punishment", in which the state and the church through "the establishment of the absolute monarchy and the strong revival/resurgence of the Catholic faith in the Counter-Reformation" were both in competition with each other as well as complicit for the public order.<sup>9</sup> At the beginning of the 17th century, according to Foucault, in England was

the obligation to establish trade, workshops, factories (mills, spinning mills, weaving mills), which give the inmates of such establishments work and support [...] but the development of this bridewells is not very considerable, therefore they are gradually becoming from the prisons to which they belonged, absorbed. (John Howard, *États des prisons, the hôpitaux et of the maisons de force*, 2 vols., Paris 1788, Vol. I, p. 17; original English, London 1777) [...] In contrast, the workhouses were more widespread and come from the second half of the 17th century.<sup>10</sup>

Foucault writes that just a few years after its founding, only the L'Hôpital général de Paris accommodated 6,000 people, or about 1% of the population.<sup>11</sup> The reason for the creation of these penitentiaries was to combat the economic problems of the time such as unemployment and 'idleness'. A new work ethic and also the dream of a new city should be established, in which, through the authoritarian forms of compulsion, the moral obligation should coincide with civil law.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in the course of industrialisation, the modern bourgeois state takes

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<sup>8</sup> Foucault 1978: 76-77.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Ibd.* ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibd.*: 78: "At the end of the 18th century, the number of *workhouses* in England totaled 126. [...] After a few years, a whole network covered Europe (England, Holland, Germany, France, Italy, Spain - all early capitalist countries) – hospitals, prisons, penitentiaries held behind the same walls, ransomed persons, youths who disrupted their family's wellbeing or squandered their fortunes, captivating vagrants and the mentally ill. [...] So, what is the reality of this whole population, which was almost enclosed from one day to another and stricter banished as the lepers, asks Foucault.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.* Lallemand 1902 – 1912: 262, In Foucault 1978: 79.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibd.*: 80: "behind this was the condemnation of idleness. [...] From the beginning (royal edict of April 27, 1656) the hospital was charged with the task of preventing beggary and idleness as the source of disorder. In fact, this was the last major measure since the Renaissance to put an end to unemployment or at least begging. (See footnote: From a spiritual point of view, misery was considered a threat to the Apocalypse at the end of the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century "J.P. Camus). The Parliament of Paris had decided in 1532 to arrest the beggars and force them to work in the sewers of Paris. [...] The crisis intensified because on March 23, 1534, the poor scholars and the needy were

over the organisation of work within capitalistically developed societies. Economics takes up the modern realm of labor in which people produce their goods and commodities, that they need to live and maintain. Here, the free market replaced the ancient understanding of private *oikos*.<sup>13</sup> The relationship between the 'private' and the public space is changing, as the work with the emergence of the capitalist modes of production of the bourgeoisie has been pulled out of the 'hidden' into the public and people began to show themselves as working beings.

As work no longer takes place in the private sphere, the public is gradually becoming a political and economic space.<sup>14</sup> In the context of the capitalist mode of production, which developed in the wake of mercantilism and in the context of the division of labor or collective work, the 'Estates Assembly' slowly developed into a modern parliament.<sup>15</sup> The biological - organic life of the people, which until then had been in the organisational form of the family, became 'public' by means of the 'inorganic state organisation' and at the same time a 'mechanistic life' - an 'apparatus'.

This could be achieved through state construction such as that of Hobbesian "Leviathan", in which the violence in "nature" and the natural state of man is located. The violence in Hobbesian state of nature refers to the "fear of death" and the "loss of property", that is, the absence of "rights" that could protect the "life" and "property" of man. For this reason, people create a 'contract' among themselves, become 'citizens' and place themselves under a sovereign power that protects their lives and property.<sup>16</sup> This theory is followed by Rousseau's social contract<sup>17</sup>, which comes into force through the consent of each individual who have joined together to form a sum of individual wills. As soon as the social contract and its regulations, such as the guarantee of freedom - as 'civil liberty' - are violated by the non-observance of the contracting parties, the original rights of the state of nature come back into force, the state prior the mutual consent to the social contract. In the state conceived by Rousseau, there should be no superior authority, since the state may consist only of equals, which form a 'moral whole' and consist of as many members as the assembly has votes and corresponds to a representative parliament.

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ordered to leave the city. [...] The religious wars multiplied this suspicious crowd, where peasants expelled from their lands, dismissed soldiers or deserters, unemployed, poor students and the sick were. When Henri IV besieged Paris, it contained more than 30,000 beggars among less than 100,000 inhabitants (See. Platter, *Description de Paris* 1899.)

<sup>13</sup> Arendt: 43; gr. Οικία: the house, that means the entire household and private life in antiquity; ιδιον designates in the life of the Greeks; what the citizen called his own.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Arendt 2002: In antiquity, this was the area of freedom and was called polis, which was considered political.

<sup>15</sup> See Habermas 1990.

<sup>16</sup> Hobbes 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Rousseau 2003: 17.

This is intended to portray an act of 'social unity' in which the individual is considered a communal and political being and in the manner of Rousseau corresponded to a republic, which should guide the common good of society members. The members of the social contract should form a 'whole' - a people, consisting of individual citizens.

In doing so, the social grouping was based on mutual commitment, on the one hand of the state - as a public authority and an instance of a popular sovereign over the contracting citizens by the protection of their rights. On the other hand, the individual citizen endeavors to respect the contract with the sovereign. The *social contract* of both contracting parties is justified by the common interest that exists in the preservation of peace. *Sovereignty* is, in the sense of Rousseau, the exercise of the common will, which is the common interest of citizens and is made up of the sum of the special interests that constitute the private interest of the citizens. The public welfare of the society, which is to be transferred to a sovereign by transmitting the power of the people, is being pursued. The people are subject to the law, whose author it is and which represents the cornerstone of the democratic political system and its constitutions of the state, as for example in the Basic Law. Art 20. was anchored: All state power comes from the people. The 'public power' became a representative parliament, by developing from the stands politically institutionalised organs, which formerly consisted of professional associations and organisations and developed into the sphere of bourgeois society.<sup>18</sup> From then on, modern *society*<sup>19</sup> and the 'public' emerge, which has developed from the broad strata of the bourgeoisie as an extension and as a complement to the sphere of small-family intimacy.<sup>20</sup> In this formerly communal private sphere of necessities, the means of violence were used to rule the family. However, since this area was now transferred to the public, the state could claim "the monopoly of legitimate physical violence."<sup>21</sup> At the same time, this means that the spillover of 'violence' has widened, especially as it affects public space - as "legitimate violence" and persists in the "privacy of the invidues" in the form of 'forbidden violence' - known as domestic violence, for example. Through the urbanisation and industrialisation (early capitalist countries) in the course of Western modernisation and rationalisation processes, the transition from the feudal society of absolutist rule to the modern disciplinary power of capitalistically organised bourgeois society or even industrial society is marked. The absolutist rule was still a 'natural' order, which was under a 'sovereign power', in which the state was perceived as an

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Habermas 1990: 19-25.

<sup>19</sup> Latin-Romanian Dictionary, see lat. *Societas*, - atis; - community, union, alliance, association; in the sense that people are together subject to life and its necessities; the human bond caused by the need to work and to be mortal. In short: the necessary human coexistence that is guided by biological impulses and constraints.

<sup>20</sup> Habermas 1990: 68, see also 69-70.

<sup>21</sup> Dahrendorf 2006: 6/Weber 2006.

organic body as a “corpus mysticum” and the sovereign, monarch or prince as the head of this ‘body’. This changed, among other things, with the increasing technical development, in which came the opinion that the state is an ‘apparatus’ - an artificial mechanism and a technical order. In parallel with the advancing developments of the secular sciences, there has also been a change in the way society is perceived, as it has been transformed from agrarian and manual forms of work to industrial practices and working methods through “disciplinary techniques and the sanitation of the working world”. Thus, one increasingly began to divide the working people into economic classes.<sup>22</sup> This was crucial for the modern understanding of violence, because Marx saw in the inequality and injustice of social conditions, the discrepancy between poverty and wealth, the source of all violence leading to the historical class struggle. The topic of ‘social violence’ remains topical to this day and is especially concerned with the question of ‘justice’ or problems of equal rights or social exclusion. At the same time as the classes but also gender segregation was made, they also began to subdivide the people according to their biological characteristics, categorise and thus classify them. This was accompanied by the separation of the ‘working’ and thus ‘unfree’ and therefore ‘lower’ people from the ‘political’, ‘free’ and thus ‘higher’ people. As a result, the inversion and at the same time separation from ‘private’ and ‘public’ space took place, since the concept of ‘privacy’ first constituted itself in relation to property.<sup>23</sup>

According to Habermas, wage-earners were forced to exchange labor as commodities, while private owners, as commodity owners, traded with each other by exchanging goods. Thus, only the owners were their own masters and only they were entitled to the public use of their reason by means of political voting rights and thus admitted in the ‘public’.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, only those were called to represent the community, which acted in order, from which all others living in the “state of nature”<sup>25</sup> were decided and cared for. The individual therefore participates in politics since then only through his ‘representatives’<sup>26</sup>, since all ‘working’ people - who possessed nothing but their labor power, were regarded as ‘disorderly souls’, as the ‘nature – people’ guided by their passions and impulses, who can not embrace their reason and therefore need a superordinate, now secular ‘order’ of their community so that the ‘property’, which is composed of life, freedom and possession, could be protected from each other.

It can therefore be said that the modern ‘public power’ and its legal system has assumed the form of a ‘bureaucratic state’ through the emergence of

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<sup>22</sup> Voegelin 2008: 103.

<sup>23</sup> Habermas 1990: 96.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*: 136.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Rousseau 2003: 19 and Hobbes 2008: 132-138; 138-150, 150 -164.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Voegelin 2008: 103.



the bourgeoisie, since it was primarily a matter of protecting the 'property' of the possessing 'bourgeoisie'. Locke binds the state or constitutional law namely to a *common consent* and Montesquieu led it par excellence back to the *raison humaine*. As a result, political consciousness is fundamentally possible and articulates in a bourgeois public the demand for general and abstract laws as a counterforce to absolute forms of rule. In addition, only public opinion ensures the legitimacy of these laws.<sup>27</sup> Thus, while J. Locke laid the foundation for the modern understanding of "property and private possession" with his philosophical theory, Marx identified in J. Locke's famous work "life, liberty and estate" the 'political emancipation'<sup>28</sup> which should lead to new forms of violence.

### ***2.1. Knowledge as an instrument of Bio-power***

Parallel to the progressive modernisation processes and thus the developments of the sciences in Europe, an ever more clearly recognisable idea of the human races arises. Not least thanks to Darwin<sup>29</sup> and the newly developed natural sciences since the late seventeenth century, which began to develop biological and geological taxonomies and systematics. Important representatives were Linné and Buffon.<sup>30</sup> With the invention of the microscope<sup>31</sup> it became possible to classify scientific discoveries accurately and to design systematic orders from variables and grids or classification methods.<sup>32</sup>

For with the separation of body and mind through modern science, the senses became, for example, parts of a more or less well-functioning machine 'body'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Habermas : 72.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*: 75.

<sup>29</sup> Simmel 1908: 392-393: "The struggle for existence: that is, the natural struggle for existence of all living things with the optimistic prediction that an automatic selection of the most capable will take place and the unlimited possibilities inherent in the conception of evolution, the descent of man from animals, out of which the new science of humanity Eugenics was born."

<sup>30</sup> Reinhard 2006: 410.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*: 98-99: "On the one hand the microscope (Antoni van Leeuwenhoek), on the other hand two different telescopes (Galilei and Kepler / Scheiner) were invented: the eye wanted to seize the big and the distant as well as the very small one. With the spread of the central perspective through the Italian Renaissance distance to the object and thus an essential prerequisite of modernity was created. "(Nelson) The human with his senses was solved from an overall context in which things are not only present, but mean something and point something behind them. Now the world has also been disenchanting by a third-objective third between the human being, his soul and his senses, in the form of ever new technical - visual aids of all kinds [...]. (Havelange). "

<sup>32</sup> Foucault 1974: 171-175; 178-179.

<sup>33</sup> Reinhard 2006: 99: „Foucault wrote of the *looks that look without being seen*; raised to the system in the draft jail by Jeremy Bentham in 1791, which received the notable name *Panopticum* for the overseers could see everything. "

The classification systems clearly separated humans and animals;<sup>34</sup> nature was measured and ordered by means of certain combinations of features. Plants were assigned to specific plant families and animals and humans were divided into species, genera and breeds. Science came to the conclusion in the 20th century that man too was divisible into different 'races'. During the period of European colonisation of the world,<sup>35</sup> from about the end of the 15th to the middle of the 18th century, European explorers believed that this 'fact' was confirmed, as it affected people of different 'racial characteristics' such as physique or Skin color met. In connection with the respective native culture and ways of life one arrived at the 'logical' conclusion of a hierarchisation of the different human races.<sup>36</sup> From a strictly biologicistic and radically eurocentric perspective,<sup>37</sup> one constructed a connection between phenotypic traits that, for example, were believed to be signs of underdeveloped intelligence and the 'degree of civilisation' of a population group, thus providing the supposed evidence of the truthfulness of racial theory. The race theory considered dark-skinned humans for

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<sup>34</sup> Lorenz 1983.

<sup>35</sup> Reinhard 2006: 390-391: "A balance of colonialism amounts to the continuous cultural westernisation of the world. [...] The westernisation of ecosystems through the spread of European agriculture has been indispensable, but not without damaging consequences. The world food industry is unthinkable without the crops, American origin, such as corn or potato, and the world's raw materials and energy industries are no longer without mining and oil. Above all, however, large parts of the world are involved in state-of-the-art production processes, in the marketing of their products and in intercontinental financial transactions of the highest degree. Everywhere in the world, layers, groups and structures of Western style are in line with this economic world. This includes a state that at least formally conforms to the standard model of the Western modern democratic nation-state. Above all, however, we have an increasing standardisation of the worlds of life not only of the elites, but more and more of the masses before us."

<sup>36</sup> Lipphardt/Patel 2007: 44-48.: „Two important documents are cited here: 'races' of humans are traditionally regarded as genetically uniform but mutually different. [...] However, recent advances based on the methods of molecular genetics and mathematical models of population genetics show that this definition is completely inappropriate. The new scientific evidence does not support the earlier view that human populations could be classified into separate 'races' such as 'Africans', 'Eurasiers' [...] or any larger number of subgroups. [...] This document emphatically states that there is no scientifically reliable way to characterize human diversity with the rigid terms of 'racial' categories or the traditional 'race' concept. There is no scientific reason to continue using the term 'race'. UNESCO-Workshop 1996: 71-72. „For centuries scholars have sought to comprehend patterns in nature by classifying living things. The only living species in the human family, *Homo sapiens*, has become a highly diversified global array of populations. The geographic pattern of genetic variation within this array is complex, and presents no major discontinuity. Humanity cannot be classified into discrete geographic categories with absolute boundaries. Furthermore, the complexities of human history make it difficult to determine the position of certain groups in classifications. Multiplying subcategories cannot correct the inadequacies of these classifications“. American Association of Physical Anthropologists. 1996: 569-570.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

example as direct descendant of the primate and precursor of the 'white' human. The result is the 'science' of eugenics and with it the biopolitics,<sup>38</sup> in which the genealogical features<sup>39</sup> and the biological characteristics become more and more important.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the attention of the eugenics and politicians increasingly focused on preventing the 'mixing of races'. 'Purebred' people were considered per se as 'superior' so politically on the one hand, a rapprochement with the colonised population was prevented and legitimised on the other hand their exploitation.

Foucault says that:

beginning with the 17th century, political power has taken over the administration of life by, first of all, conceiving that the body was a machine, that through its dressage, the increase of its abilities, the exploitation of its powers, the increase of its usefulness and his erudition, expressed his integration into effective and economical control system, since one operated political anatomy of the human body.<sup>41</sup>

Secondly, from the middle of the eighteenth century, people concentrated on the

Generic body that is thwarted by the mechanics of the living and underlying the biological processes, where reproduction(s), birth and mortality rates, health status, lifetime, longevity and all its variational conditions have become the subject of intervention and regulatory controls: Bio-politics of the population.<sup>42</sup>

The discipline of the body and the regulation of the population form the two poles around which the power to life has been organised, which serves the

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<sup>38</sup> Euchner 2001: 379: „The advances in gene research in the twentieth century not only led to the current promises of genetically purged humanity, but they also transformed Darwinian evolution into the strictly gen theoretical discipline *sociobiology* (with the "central theorem" of Inclusive fitness, see 382) and *biopolitics*. Darwin himself had only vague ideas about genetic factors that could support his heredity and selection theory. But the rediscovery of *Gregor Mendel's* theory of inheritance in 1866, the recognition that the basic elements of the chromosomes, termed "genes" by the Danish geneticist *Wilhelm Johansen* in 1909, cause a new phenotype through mutation, finally the study of the form and the chemical Properties of the genes allowed a redefinition of inheritance theory and thus the Darwinian selection theory." (See this success story, to the discovery of the double helix form of the chemical basis of genes, the DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) Ridley 1999: 50-68.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibd.*: 381: Richard Dawkins characterisation of the people, which extends to the view that they are: „survival machines-robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes.“According to Dawkins, there is no genetic basis for every pattern of behavior, as tradition and education play a significant role in the field of culture.

<sup>40</sup> Arendt 2009: 393-396: "The notion of inheritance is coupled with the concept of achievement."

<sup>41</sup> Foucault 1979: 166.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibd.*

subjugation of the body and the control of the population, which characterises this bio-power.<sup>43</sup>

It is important to understand that the nation-state reached its limits in its economic development during this time, because the economic process stagnated due to lack of growth and less capital accumulation. The national economies are experiencing in this time that their economic growth is over, if no new markets are tapped or opened up, because it lacked resources and sales markets, in order to be able to continue the production processes to this extent. In fact, the condition of steady economic growth is the constant progression and increase of production through the development of new resources and markets. Despite their accumulated capital surplus, European nations came into an economic crisis at the end of the 19th century. The countermeasure was to expand the national market simply by expanding, or colonising. The surplus flowed into the discovery, colonisation and subjugation of other lands by 'opening up and developing' a new market, where on the one hand resources such as coal, steel, oil, natural gas and ores, which were urgently needed in European industries, and on the other hand could mine gold and diamonds.<sup>44</sup>

In order to be able to maintain the capitalist economic system and the nation states of Europe, the European expansion efforts were constantly pushed forward. The population of the colonised territories became cheap labor or slave labor, which was legitimised by the concept of 'lower races' described above. The extermination of the native population and the subsequent resettlement were also part of the colonial practice of the Europeans, since slavery was neither part of the social question for Europeans nor for Americans and according to Arendt; played virtually no role.<sup>45</sup>

Arendt concludes that this has eliminated the "strongest and perhaps most dangerous of all revolutionary passions - the passion of compassion".

It is clear that racial thinking reached its peak here and could be imported back to Europe from outside. Racial ideologies contributed to the legitimacy of nation-state policies by helping to construct the "foreign" outside and within state borders and to strengthen the supposedly "right" national identity. The concept of the 'other' or the "stranger"<sup>46</sup> was the antithesis of their own nation, imbued

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.: 166-167 See also „Power and knowledge processes take the processes of life into their own hands.“ 168-169.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Hannah Arendt 2009: 428 ff.

<sup>45</sup> Arendt 2014: 90-91.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Schütz 1971: 53-69. See his theory of the *recipe system* - "Rezept-System" of cultural and civilisation patterns as patterns of adaptation and application.

with the 'national spirit', which was also strongly bound to the physical<sup>47</sup>. The nation not only represented a specific territory in which one spoke a common language, but at the same time adopted the idea of the 'body', as occurs, for example, in Th. Hobbes's political philosophy, and was previously attributed to the state apparatus.

In the Middle Ages and early modern times, the state was considered a body, not only metaphorically, but by representation as a kind of "human being of higher order." [...] "When human beings are understood as machines in the 18th century, then they immediately emerge the idea of the state as a machine."<sup>48</sup>

The idea of the nation legitimises itself on the basis of the idea of a closed body, in which certain groups, however, have experienced social exclusiveness through their difference from national similarities. Arendt states that:

The political-legal equality of all before the law was guided by a growing similarity of social and material circumstances. However, the more similar the circumstances, the less the average political mind can grasp the differences that exist in reality, the greater will be the inequalities between individuals and groups.<sup>49</sup>

The spirit and the body belonged to the nation, the children belonged to the nation, the men committed their life to the nation. Belonging to the nation was defined and legitimised from a strongly biologicistic perspective. However, Arendt states that the nation's political conception, based on a historical unity of

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Reinhard 2006: 58: [...] „The conception of the body of the Middle Ages included the idea of the church as *Corpus Christi mysticum* [...] as a juridical person... [...] That is why the corresponding social structures, which certainly existed, like guilds, cities, estates, cathedral chapters were called *corpus*. [...] Renaissance architects developed city plans from the human figure [...] like their ancient model Vitruvius as from the harmony of the limbs and organs. [...] With such representations, however, they are not only linked to antiquity, but also to medieval images in which the cosmos was inscribed in the body of the man of God, Christ.. (Reudenbach in Schreiner/Schnitzler; compare Ramaswami in Duden/Noeres 57-76) [...] Instead of the state that did not yet exist, the king stood with his two bodies, the mortal human and the immortal political. In this way, the idea of the person-independent continuity of a nascent state power was conveyed. [...] such ideas amount to a politically quite effective *organic* conception of the state, a hierarchical functionalism of different organs, a natural, irrational, human will - and above all majority voting, which was not subject to political order. It is well known that such concepts lived further into the organic conception of the Catholic social doctrine with their professional social order and the European fascists of the 20th century, if they wanted to build the state from corporations."

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Reinhard 2006: 57-58: „In the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, the state was considered a body, not only metaphorically, but by representation, as a kind of human being of a higher order." [...] "When man was understood in the 18th century as a "machine", then immediately appeared the idea of the state as a machine."

<sup>49</sup> Arendt 2009: 138.

territory, people and state, was not sufficient to establish a 'unified' sense of nationality, so that 'foreign' populations were more or less compulsorily 'assimilated'.<sup>50</sup> Biopolitics as a "political-biological power technique" of a strongly authoritarian policy and the unified national construct derived their legitimacy from each other. One of the goals of this policy(s) was above all in the construction of a common enemy (image). On the one hand, this held together the 'community' and, on the other hand, it served 'economic growth and profit', as it could force the 'enemy' into unpaid labor to fulfill the promise of 'modernisation'.

As one can easily see, repressive homogenisation measures based on biopolitics serve less to enforce their ideological content than to legitimise and strengthen one's 'own' political and, above all, economic power.

## **2.2. Bio-power and the age of total rule<sup>51</sup>**

Although the National Socialist and Communist dictatorship resembled each other in form, they differed completely in their ideological content and purpose as well as in their political and economic implementation; namely, the "brown dictatorship" pursued a racially motivated claim to the world power, while the "red dictatorship" relied on socialist class struggle and political economy.<sup>52</sup> Both operate with the means of bio-power or bio-politics, which corresponds to a concept that Foucault coined in his book *The Will to Knowledge* and the lecture of

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<sup>50</sup> Reinhard 2006: 381-282: „Jürgen Osterhammel (2001: 222 or 1998) describes six different demarcation practices or ways to deal with the stranger: 1. Inclusion or integration; 2. Accomodation, 3. Assimilation or complete acculturation – which amounts to a total alignment of the stranger with the "own", through mission or xenophilia, which crushes the stranger because it wants to liberate him from his otherness (see Menzel), or through tacit habitual acceptance of the new practice, or even deliberate decision for it on the part of the stranger; (Arendt uses this term, however, in an ironic grotesque sense, as an allusion to the sixth form of the actual Extermination) 4. Exclusion, 5. Segregation, 6. Extermination by physically exterminating the stranger or at least by destroying his cultural identity, such as the forced assimilation of Australian Aborigines, as it was practiced until recently." [...] According to Reinhard, "conflict-free cultural contact tends to be the exception, as cultural contact usually results in cultural conflict, in that hard power in the form of military or economic coercion (hard power after Joseph Nye 2002) even plays a greater role than soft power (soft power attractiveness from foreign cultural patterns).“, See also Arendt 2009: 289-290.

<sup>51</sup> "The term totalitarian was coined in 1923 by the fascist critic Giovanni Amendola when he criticised the actions of Mussolini's fascist hordes as a new phenomenon of political behavior, calling it a "sistema totalitario", that aspired to absolute and uncontrollable rule in politics and administration." [...] "We can then speak of a totalitarian rule, if it combines the overcoming of the separation of powers, the abolition of party pluralism and control of power by secret ballot, and the elimination of independent judicature, with simultaneous, complete control over the means of power, legitimised by an ideology, which is aimed at the radical implementation of a new social model." See Funke 1996: 152-153.

<sup>52</sup> Funke 1996: 155.

March 17, 1976.<sup>53</sup> Foucault defines the concept of bio-power as modern power and government technology, which has extended its political-economic sphere of influence to the social sphere since the 18th and 19th centuries.

Bio-power intervened in the private space, as it increasingly devoted itself to the biological. Through biological-political techniques of discipline, bio-power not only began to control 'life' but to "make it".

The interest of organic power began to focus more and more on the 'species – man' and 'life', after the human being or the "bodies" of the individuals were already 'sanitised' and 'trained' by the disciplinary power. Through the techniques of rationalisation, such as the classification, monitoring or serialisation of individuals, an entire surveillance and control system was created to serve the economic and political benefits of bio-power. The interest of the bio-power towards death shifted and played a less and less important role since the 15th and 16th centuries.

Death still played an important role for the sovereignty power, especially in the public sphere, as witnessed by the ritualised executions, tortures and processions performed to enforce the 'regulatory power' of the monarch, prince or sovereign.

Until the 18th and 19th centuries, 'death' and physical violence still belonged to the public space and was only with the advent of bio-power, left to the private sector. Thus, the 'life' now became a public affair of bio-power.

Due to the exclusion of 'death', 'life' was 'sanitised' and 'death' tabooed and anonymised, because for the bio-power, "making life" is important.

Through the categories "make life" and "let die," the bio-power can 'use' the population in the interest of 'their' conservation and reproduction as an instrument of the capitalist system.

However, by being able to determine 'life', one also decides who should be 'left to die' and thus decides on 'death' as well.

Giorgio Agamben, in the introduction to his work *Homo Sacer*, explains that for Foucault, man is used as a species and individual of the biopower: "as simple living bodies for the use of their political strategy".

The Bio-power created "appropriate technologies" a "disciplinary control" over the population, by training them to "docile body" to help capitalism to its "development and triumph." Agamben sees in modern biopolitics, similar to Arendt, the shifting of political interests, which are now more focused on the "bare life", as *zoe* and *bios* are now increasingly coinciding.<sup>54</sup>

This reveals to Agamben the "hidden foundation on which the whole political system rested."<sup>55</sup> Agamben states that the process of development of

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<sup>53</sup> Foucault 1999: 276-305.

<sup>54</sup> Aristoteles. 2010: [1095a32- b19], [1095b 19- 1096a 9]. Cf. also Agamben 2002: 11.

<sup>55</sup> Agamben 2002: 19.

modern democracy involved the process of “disciplining” and “sanitising” human beings, because the state power made the “human being as a living being” his object and the human being himself as a living being is no longer presented as an “object, but as a *subject* of political power.”<sup>56</sup>

In order to better understand the psychology of these “bureaucratic power structures” of totalitarian rule, Foucault's analysis of “*Discipline and punish*” can be used. Foucault uses the idea of J. Bentham's *Panopticon*<sup>57</sup> to illustrate power and disciplinary practices involving numerous techniques and institutions for measuring, controlling, and ameliorating the *abnormal*.<sup>58</sup> Like the Panopticon, the totalitarian system, as it becomes clear in National Socialism, creates:

A network of power structures in which each individual is supervised by 'power' by establishing a conscious and permanent state of visibility within society, which ensures the automatic functioning of power, albeit juggling that power is visible but must be invisible (secluded), visible as the society constantly sees and perceives the structures of power through the institutions and their executors (such as the SS or the secret police), from whom the individual is spied and controlled, secluded inasmuch as the individual may never know whether he is being monitored or not, but he must be sure that he can be monitored at all times.<sup>59</sup>

Crucial here is, according to Foucault, that the

Panopticon is a machine for divorcing the couple to see / be seen, and thus automates and de-individualises power, with the principle of power less in a person than in a concentrated arrangement of bodies, surfaces, lights, and looks;

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibd.*

<sup>57</sup> Foucault 1976: 256-257: “Bentham's panopticon is the architectural shape of this composition. Its principle is known: on the periphery an annular building; in the middle a tower pierced by wide windows opening to the inside of the ring; the ring building is divided into cells, each of which extends through the entire depth of the building; they each have two windows, one inward, which is directed towards the windows of the tower, and one to the outside, so that the cell is penetrated by light on both sides. It is therefore sufficient to set up a supervisor in the tower and to place in each cell a lunatic, a sick person, a convict, a worker or a pupil. In front of the backlight, the small prisoner silhouettes in the cells of the ring can be clearly seen from the tower. Each cage is a small theater in which each actor is alone, completely individualised and constantly visible. The principle of the dungeon is reversed, more precisely: of its three functions - locking in, darkening and concealing - only the first is maintained, the other two fall away. The full light and the gaze of the overseer capture better than the darkness, which also protected. Visibility is a trap. [...] Everyone is securely locked in his place in a cell where he is exposed to the eyes of the overseer; but the side walls prevent him from making contact with his companions. He is seen without seeing for himself; he is an object of information, never a subject in communication.”

<sup>58</sup> *Ibd.*: 256.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibd.*: 258-259.



in an apparatus whose internal mechanisms establish the relationship in which the individuals are trapped.<sup>60</sup>

This is a specific:

type of implantation of bodies in space, the distribution of individuals in their relationship to each other, the hierarchical organisation, the arrangement of centers of power and channels, the definition of instruments and intervention tactics of power and this type can be used in hospitals, factories, schools and prisons, so whenever you are dealing with a variety of individuals to whom a task or behavior is to be imposed, the panoptic scheme can be used.<sup>61</sup>

Panopticism is the metaphorical transmission of the bureaucratisation of power and its structures:

the generalisation of discipline, and the multiplication of disciplinary institutions, through an ever-expanding network, into the entire body of society, by taking control of time and space through its parceling form and allowing society to become programmable for its systemic functions.<sup>62</sup>

After these disciplinary techniques were implemented in society, bio-power in the form of initially totalitarian regimes could consolidate to modern democracies. That may sound contradictory, that the same 'power' - the bio-power, which initially instilled itself through totalitarian systems of rule, should be the same power that 'lead' democratic systems of rule. This becomes understandable, however, when one realises that the bio-power - which concentrates on "making life" was created at the same time as the process of secularisation arose. This means that after the 'political power' disempowered the ecclesiastical world order and ascended to secular order, it needed legitimacy, which 'explained' its rule with its "rules of order" and with its institutions and "laws".<sup>63</sup>

The 'new power' needed the legitimacy more and more urgent, since the contradiction of the bourgeois modern state and its 'power relations' became more and more visible. The contradiction was according to Arendt, on the one hand, that "the freedom and equality of all" was proclaimed and, on the other hand, the "inequality" between the classes, the sexes and especially the races,

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.: 259.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.: 264.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.: 268-269.

<sup>63</sup> Cornelius Castoriadis 1984: 197-220.

continued to increase. In order to be able to maintain this 'order system' and to be able to justify their claim to 'rule over man and over life', it required a legitimisation of power, which could no longer be derived by religion and the 'divine' determination. Man's 'nature' needed a 'worldly' - secular explanation. This explanation was found in science, which could now take the place of religion. The secular sciences now took the place of religion to 'explain' the prevailing conditions of life, of man, and of nature. It was also possible to explain the contradictions between postulated values and political practice, which on the one hand consisted in proclaiming a general freedom of the citizen and on the other hand in imperialism and slavery. The modern sciences have been able to explain the conflicting principles such as 'ownership' on the one hand and the expropriation of other cultures and civilisations and the exploitation of their territories for resources on the other. Thus, the two totalitarian systems of power of the twentieth century found in the historical materialism à la Marx and in the racial theoretic approaches the appropriate - scientific legitimisation of their bio-political violent measures and homogenisation efforts.

### Conclusions

Such repressive rule practices, as the exploitation of the people by power, are already being discussed in Plato. In the first book of the *Politeia*, Plato's and Socrates' counter-speech Thrasymachus sees in the righteous nothing but the "advantage of the stronger" [338c].<sup>64</sup>

Plato illustrates in his dialogue that what is conducive to the superior or what is beneficial to the state can be interpreted by the latter as the "just".

Governments, especially totalitarian regimes or arbitrary rule, interpret this as a "just" law, which is conducive to maintaining their power and privileges, and can thus make "injustice" legal - since it is the "legitimate power" of the state. Injustice but also violence can thus be legitimised in a despotism by state legalisation. Racial discrimination or expropriation processes are examples of state-legalised "injustice" and 'state violence', especially in totalitarian regimes. Such power practices are legitimised in the name of common 'identification' features such as religion, culture or civilisation, even in the name of freedom, nation, race and not least in the name of 'democracy' and are a typical instrument of bio-power for the purpose of securing their power.

It can be concluded that Foucault's concept of bio-power has lost none of its acuteness. The regulation techniques of bio-power, such as the "serialisation,

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<sup>64</sup> Platon 2006. See book eight & nine.

monitoring, hierarchy, control, record and reports" have only increased further when one looks at modern communication technologies and social media such as Facebook, Instagram, etc. Indisputable is the economic benefit that the bio-power gains from this for itself. From this it can be seen that the bio-power, through the means of 'technology' could extend their political-economic influence even deeper into the 'private life' of the individual. This is held together politically by identity-creating factors and terms - such as the common 'democracy' and the construction of enemy images, through terms like 'terror'. Such bipolar constructions, as the 'friend-enemy-image', were previously used by totalitarian regimes.

The difference here is that today's enemy model, compared to the 'class enemy' (of Bolshevism) or the 'xenophobia image' under National Socialism, is not directly concretised. For example, today's enemy image - in the form of 'terror' - is an anonymous, unknown and therefore abstract enemy that can not be grasped, which increases the danger that anyone can be declared an 'enemy of the system or the bio-power'.

It was also one of the most engraving marks and dangers of totalitarian rule, since everyone could be declared an enemy of the system or of the power. Today's 'victim' can become the 'perpetrator' of tomorrow. Questionable are these 'good-evil' – 'fair-unfair' metaphors and their contained positive and negative connotations, as can be seen from the concepts of 'good' and thus 'civilised' and 'peaceful' democracy, which can be associated with the 'Own' and on the other side the 'evil' 'unknown' – and thus 'stranger' 'terror' from the 'Middle East'.

"To use the old idiom: they (words) 'mean' things. Therefore, we grasp the phenomena of meaning by recognising how the words associate with their designata. And this can ultimately be explained by the fact that the mind uses them as names or hallmarks of things (or ideas) [...] the meaning of a word consists in what it signifies. Meaning is designation, designation"<sup>65</sup>

The 'classification' into 'good' and 'bad' or the up and devaluation of these terminologies is not only to be criticised here, but to be regarded as a danger, as it feeds left- or right-wing populism and serves the maintenance of political and social violence.

By recognising, collecting and deciphering the "sleeping language and its signs",<sup>66</sup> by reviving them, the attempt is made to shed some light on modern forms of violence. In a hermeneutic sense, language serves as a vehicle for communication, and is thus a tool of knowledge. But it can easily be used as an

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<sup>65</sup> Taylor 1988: 55.

<sup>66</sup> Foucault 1994: 65.

instrument of 'violence'. According to Foucault, the relationship to the texts is of the same nature as the relationship to things; here and there you pick up signs. This is about "putting our image of the empirical world on solid foundations in the form of clear, unambiguous definitions of our basic concepts," to recognise reality as it really is and not as it seems.

Rational thinking, which strives for a cognition of the world, therefore tries to establish representations. Words are an indispensable tool because they allow us to deal with groups of ideas at the same time, rather than constructing our picture of the world, so to speak piece by piece.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, bio-power operates with the construction of enemy images, which are intended to motivate their political and economic action by using (ecological) terms with biologically/socially degrading and classifying terms, as one can easily see from the notion of the 'wave of refugees', which comes from the right-populist camp.

Here, the 'refugees' are not only referred to as 'foreign', which are 'socially' and 'culturally' excluded by the fact that they are on the run and thus not 'sedentary', as the 'nomads' and have therefore no 'possessions'.

This is also associated with the danger of an ecological catastrophe - a tsunami wave - and thus not only 'negatively charged' but also declared a 'danger' par excellence. This example illustrates how 'terms' and their inherent meanings, can establish very specific representations and thus construct 'reality'.

In this context, Charles Taylor speaks of a "dimension of linguistic action that forms the centerpiece of a theory of meaning" and "is considered something that provides possible or actual images of an independent reality, within which possible or actual information about reality is coded."<sup>68</sup>

The significance of the bio-power and its understanding of violence today emerges through the representation of its developmental process, which in turn - by using words to formulate representations - consists of the generation of representation.<sup>69</sup> Based on this theory of meaning, it is thus possible to determine the place occupied by the concept of 'violence' in the modern life of modern societies.

On this basis, of 'terms' such as 'anonymous terror', the tools of bio-power are growing, ultimately serving to increase the control, regulation and discipline of the population and in the face of today's communication technologies or better control surveillance systems, which are increasingly becoming part of private life the question of the "emancipation" of citizens can be raised.

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<sup>67</sup> Taylor 1988: 54.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*: 58.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*: 60, 63.

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