

POWER AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INDIVIDUAL IN FOUCAULT'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Michel Foucault's primary interest was the power, discourse, pleasure, desires, and how these generally make up our individuality, or rather the key ways through which modern society implements power over its subjects who also play an important role in shaping of the perception of ourselves as individuals. He had an unusual opinion about the individual, for he considered that he was the result of the exercising power and resisting it with resistance, demanding that he (the individual) be understood as an elemental nucleus, immovable material upon which power was reinforced. Thus, the individual is also seen as a source of resistance by giving him priority over the community, because in the center it must be the coherent individual to give it power. According to him, the individual is not a given entity previously used by the practitioners of power, on the contrary, it is through his identity and characteristics, that becomes a product of a relationship of power which is directed to bodies, movements, variability, desires, and forces. According to Foucault, the characteristic form that modern power attains is deprived of the center and is not centered on the state or another unique source from which some secondary and dependent forms would appear. Although it is commonly considered that power, at least in the European society, is located in the hands of the government and is realized through a certain number of institutions such as the administration, police, army and state apparatus, according to Foucault, however, power is also realized through other institutions which at first glance seem to have nothing in common with it and operate in a totally independent way from it. So, unlike the traditional political philosophy that usually defines power as central in the Leviathan, Foucault says it is the most common thing because it is present everywhere: in the family, between two loved ones, in the office, at the workshop, in the one-way streets.

Keywords: Power, the individual, resistance.

INTRODUCTION

The French thinker Michel Foucault is one of the most emblematic figures of the European philosophic milieu in the 60s and 70s of last century, who, through plentiful works encompasses a wide range of social-historic, philosophic-epistemological and cultural-anthropologic issues.

He is considered as a postmodernist and poststructuralist, while he regarded himself a product of modern tradition, although his works represented a comprehensive and indigenous critique of exactly this way of thinking. He is an ever actual multidisciplinary philosopher who attracted the scientific and intellectual attention quite early.

Through his ideas, he wanted to make a clear distinction from structuralism and his previous tendencies by joining the voice of other postmodern theoreticians who were trying to prove

the alternatives offered by modern philosophical systems as inadequate and enormously humanizing.

Michel Foucault's primary interest was the power, discourses, pleasures, desires, and the ways these notions constitute our individuality, the modes of subjections that are disciplinary, which also represent the ways of self-discipline, or in other words the key modes through which modern society implements power over its subjects who play a significant part in shaping the perception of ourselves as individuals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

By the hermeneutic interpretation used in this research we aim to focus on the issue of meaning interpretation, a typical qualitative interpretation which is based on the assertion that by every interpretation, the researcher constitutes reality since it is more than clear that meanings can be interpreted from certain perspectives, practices, points, regardless of whether it is about personal views related to gathered data from subjects included in the research.

The analysis and interpretation will be conducted through the technique of content analysis – data reduction by systematic categorization-identification and the objective of characteristics of messages given before or the technique of reducing any kind of qualitative material in order to identify certain consistent meanings.

The individual

Foucault had an unusual opinion about the individual, since he considered it as the result of exercising power and opposing it by resistance, and at the same time he demanded that it (the individual) should not be understood as an elementary nucleus, static material upon which power was amplified, because in fact one of the consequences of power is that certain bodies, gestures, discourses or even desires are already identified and created as individuals.

According to him, the individual is not a previously given entity which has been used by exercising power. On contrary, with identity and its features, it is a product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, movements, multiplicity, desires, forces.

“It should be emphasized that the individual is always in power, there is no escape from it, it absolutely doesn't exist out of it-where power doesn't act, since the individual is subjected to law in any case? On the contrary, the meticulous and functional character of the power's relations would be misunderstood. Their existence depends on an array of resistance points: they play the role of the opponent, target, support or control in the power relations. These power points are present everywhere in the power network there is plurality of resistances, whereas by definition they can only exist in the strategic domain of power relations”

In the empty space of man, Foucault always puts the constituting process of the human subject, free, if not even omnipotent. Subject standpoints, according to Foucault, are also determined based on the attitude towards certain fields or group objects, because “the subject is the one interrogated based on network of questions, which are clear or hidden and it is interrogated based on a certain information collection program”(Фыко, 2010).

The traditional political stance that human beings can recreate ideas for their future; be those historical or biological, and that we should eternally aim for liberty, was accepted in different forms by Foucault, but was continuously supported by intellectual curiosity on all forms of social organization(Probyn, 1997).

Foucault undoubtedly respected, even unwillingly, the traditional distinction of the French civil society between the private and public life, but nevertheless, he had attacked the traditional humanist individualism, which according to his opinion, had united its forces with the political power in order that penitentiary institutions would aim that the criminals, the insane and the uncommon are retreated to their true human nature. (Nye, 1996).

Thus, with a prominent consistency, he fostered the opposition to the creative personality, the truth towards individual and the remaining signs of the illuminist conceptions of the voluntary subject, for which, however, had the support of many other intellectuals.

Through historical analysis of discontinuities, he wanted to discover how are individuals created as both, objects and subjects of knowledge, that is, how is an individual subject to control and dependence by someone else, but is also related to his identity through awareness or self-knowledge, by which in fact rejects the illuminist model which linked consciousness, self-understanding, and freedom, and accepts the Nietzschean model according to which self-knowledge, especially through the form of awareness about moral, is the strategy and effect of power through which social control is internalized.

In a word, the human body is embedded in the power machinery dynamics that disintegrates and rebuilds it, thus producing submissive and bent bodies, by transforming its powers into skills and abilities (Canivez, 2004).

The power

According to Foucault, the characteristic form the modern power gets is deprived of the center-it is not placed on the state or some other unique source of sovereignty from which several secondary and dependent forms would emerge.

Precisely, for Foucault, it is “the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly challenge states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable” “*Power is everywhere: not that it engulfs everything, but that it comes from everywhere.* Power is “unlimited”, omnipresent, it is already there” (Foucault, 2011).

Although it is usually considered that power, at least in European society, is localized in the governmental hands and is implemented through a certain number of institutions such as: administration, police, army and state apparatus, according to Foucault, power is also implemented through other institutions which at first sight seem to have nothing in common with it and act independently.

“If we want to understand the complexity of power mechanism, but also its details, we cannot only focus on state apparatus. There is a sort of schematism that needs to be avoided here-and which incidentally is not to be found in Marx - that consists of locating power in the State apparatus, making this into the major, privileged, capital and almost unique instrument of the power of one class over another.”(Foucault, 2001).

According to him, power should be explored at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points “where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions. Its paramount concern, in fact, should be with the point where power surmounts the rules of right which organise and delimit it and extends itself beyond them, invests itself in institutions, becomes embodied in techniques, and equips itself with instruments and eventually even violent means of material intervention” (Foucault, 2009)

While he will further clarify what does he mean with the mechanisms of power, and its connectivity to the capillary form:

“I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives” (Foucault, 2001) .

Accordingly, unlike earlier political philosophy which mainly defines power as central, in Leviathan or in Apocalypse beast, Foucault says that power is the most usual thing since it is present everywhere, in family, between two loved ones, in the office, in a workshop, in one-way streets.

“Leviathan would be powerless in the crowds of minor powers, not because every power emerges from a center and not because it is omnipresent, but because there is only sand under which could not be held with a single intervention. We should through some stones in the sand, said Napoleon when he created the Legion of Honor and its honorable regime” (Veyne, 2008).

Consequently, he demands our withdrawal from Leviathan, which at the same time is the model of the artificial person, semi-automatic and invented which includes all real individuals and citizens in its body, and has sovereignty as vitalizing spirit.

“We must eschew the model of Leviathan in the study of power. We must escape from the limited field of juridical sovereignty and State institutions, and instead base our analysis of power on the study of the techniques and tactics of domination” (Foucault, 2009).

Thousands of small powers create the societal tissues which is not created by individuals, as a consequence it results that freedom is omnipresent because power is omnipresent (Foucault, 1994).

According to Foucault, power should not be analyzed even in terms of goals, objectives and decisions and should refrain from posing questions such: Who then has power and what has he in mind? What is the aim of someone who possesses power?:

“Instead, it is a case of studying power at the point where its intention, if it has one, is completely invested in its real and effective practices. What is needed is a study of power in its external visage, at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there - that is to say-where it installs itself and produces its real effects” (Foucault, 2009)

According to him, it is impossible to avoid the relations of power, however, we can reorient them at any time and everywhere, since power is a bilateral relationship, it couples with submission, to which we are free to agree with little or much resistance (Veyne, 2008).

The following instruction from Foucault related to power is to not assume it as a massive and homogenous dominance phenomenon, be that of one individual or a group or a class over the rest:

“What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess

and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth" (Foucault, 2009).

The power and the individual

The individual found within the network where power is exercised is the one through which power is distributed, but does not relate to them since the individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals.

"My hypothesis is that the individual is not a pre-given entity which is seized on by the exercise of power.

The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces"(Foucault, 2001)

Thus, the individual is not the subject which stands opposed to power; on the contrary, it is one of its prime rings and effects.

"The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle." (Foucault, 2009).

Foucault himself agreed that the reason why he dealt with power analysis was to represent the history of different modes of subjectivism of human beings in our culture:

"The general subject of my research is not the power, but the subject" (Foucault, 2001).

Therefore, according to Foucault, the issues arising nowadays, which are at the same time political, ethical, social and philosophical, are not attempts to free the individuals from the state and its institutions, but to free ourselves from the state and the sort of individualism that is fastened to it.

"We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries" (Foucault, 2001)

Unlike Greek antique, when knowledge was an antithesis of power, nowadays power utilizes several sciences and speaking in general wants to be rationally informed, so in each epoch a certain knowledge can sum up relationships with certain powers.

By claiming that power is the result of actions of social relations forces, that is diffusive, omnipresent and polymorphic, Foucault abandons the concept of power hierarchy. It is clear that some forms of power act more restrictively while some others have more producing opportunities.

Foucault also admits that the state possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence, capitalists have more power than workers but he refuses to say that one form is stricter than the other.

Precisely through genealogy according to Foucault, we understand that power is also productive because it incites pleasures and forms of knowledge; it creates discourses, and is not only repressive, always telling no to people and their actions. So much like knowledge, owned by the individual.

"However, Foucault sees ever less the power as a place of repression or a simple tool that shapes identity, but more as a game and conversation through which identity emanates. He notes that it is possible to construct what he calls 'counter-discourse' and 'counter-identities', in the sense that the individual can embrace given stigmatized features such as 'broken sexuality' and enjoy it, by making them observe it as a negative determination" (Mils, 2003).

According to him, for any form through which power is exercised and applied, there are adequate forms of resistance, although they appear within the frames of power relations.

CONCLUSION

Foucault wants to lead the private into the public sphere and thus clearly eliminate the difference, so instead of a regulatory structure of power which triggers a regime of truth more temporary wars local for power would coexist, since in the end, they are both products of power.

Foucault does not talk about the other nor he wants to do such a thing, because he doesn't want to give norms about what should be done, by refusing to become a spokesman of anyone of "us", since he is cautious related to his ability to transcend his concrete normalizing discourse.

Yet, in a way, he himself admitted that he was a product of modern power and his modes of thinking cannot completely overlook the limitations of his culture because we cannot leave our order, even if we criticize it.

In the network of modern power, which is relationist and operates from a large number of points; extremely unspecified and never something acquired, created or proportionately divided, the individual is an anonymous channel or even a secondary product, in structural activity, and never a source or center of that power (Бест & Келлер, 1996).

Therefore, he (the individual) with his identity and features, is a product of a relation of power, which is exercised on bodies, movements, desires, which makes it one of its prime effects."

Because my hypothesis is that the individual is not a pre-given entity which is seized on by the exercise of power. The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces. (Fuko, 2010).

Nevertheless, when one defines the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others, when one characterizes these actions by the government of men by other men - in the broadest sense of the term - one includes an important element: freedom

"Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions, and diverse comportments may be realized" (Foucault, 2001).

Hence where a man is chained, in captivity, there is no relation of power, but relation of physical torture, the relation of power exists when one can leave and escape.

"Power and freedom, however, do not stand one against the other, by excluding each other (wherever power is exercised, freedom vanishes), it is a more complicated game: in that game freedom appears as a condition for power existence (at the same time as its precedent, since it is necessary to have freedom so power can be exercised, and also as a permanent supporter, since if freedom seizes the power exercised on it, the power would vanish by this fact, and its

substitution should be found in the simple imposition of violence); but freedom appears even as such, that power cannot resist countering its implementation, which at the end, inclines to completely define”(Foucault, 2001).

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