

Biopower

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For many centuries, individuals have been inquisitive of what they are towards sex.

In this dimension, sex has been viewed by the history as a vital topic of discussion. Sex is not seen to represent nature. The society has placed themselves under the sign of sex. This paper represents the history of sex, as described by Michael Foucault. It also represents the application of power emanating from sex by the government authorities on its population.

There was a widespread belief in the 20th century that sexuality and other discussions about sex were repressed in the 17th, 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. This was not the case as Michael Foucault argued. Sex was not repressed since the rise of the modern society. When the bourgeois social class has come as a result of capitalism and industrialization, sex was no longer suppressed but widely talked of. This was called as a repress hypothesis (Foucault 6). The West was in a constant study of sex to determine truth.

This was used for political purposes, whereby the state claimed it had been due to the public hygiene. However, it was used to support the state racism. The Roman Catholic and confession was more inclined to northern Europe following the reformation. As a result, confession became more widespread to almost everybody in the society. By the 19th century, the truth of sex had been explored through confession and enquiry.

This confession of sexuality has come to be constituted in scientific terms. The cause of all factors in the human psychology was traced in the society to sexual factors (Foucault 8). There is a need to analyze the power to

understand sex. Power can control sex by laying down rules and laws for it to follow. Power demands obedience through the submission and subjugation. It usually masks and disguises itself as beneficial.

For instance, in the historical times, Europe was using power. It disguised itself with the claim that they had been able to keep peace, law and order. This concept of power, as from the days of feudalism, is still viewed as emanating from law. This is not correct according to Foucault. Foucault has argued that there is the need to construct the analytics of power (Foucault 12).

This power should not take law as a model, but different forms of power that governs sexuality. Power is everywhere, and it derives from everywhere. It comes from all social relationships. It is exercised throughout the society. Foucault argues that sex is tied to power and has been increasing since the 17th century.

It is also not governed by reproduction. However, it is tied to the growth of the body. The exploitation of sex as an object of knowledge is also linked to the devices of power (Foucault 16). Foucault has noted four moral codes of sexuality. They included the following ones.

Due to the role of women to bear children in the society, their bodies became more sexualized. Because of sexual problems, some concepts of sex have been developed such as hysteria. There was also a rise of sexuality of children sex. Foucault has identified this as a recurrent theme. He has argued that children should be protected from dangers and activities related to sexuality, i.

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e. from masturbation. Sexuality for reproduction should be given its priority to in studying the population growth as the two ones are interrelated. In adults, sexuality has become more common and an object of study (Foucault 18). These moral codes were not meant to abolish the forms of sexuality, but they were meant to preserve health and continued the reproduction. The society viewed sexuality as harmful.

This is because they wanted to protect health and purity of the society. This concept created that many forms of sexuality were dangerous. Foucault was against the notion that sexuality had included instincts or individual desires that a person expressed naturally. In his argument, the sexual desire that conflicted with civilized norms needed to be reserved in order to keep the society to live in harmony. Our popular culture and science as well as understanding sexuality provided the information about how we thought of and understood sexuality. Sexuality was not repressed, but it had been actively produced due to the way it was spoken about and written in our culture.

Language, knowledge practices and institutions speaking about sexuality tried to regulate it being the same disciplines that brought it into being (Foucault 24). Few disciplines have helped to bring sexuality into being. These disciplines have created sexuality as a social practice. At the same time, they have sought to understand it. The ways in which these disciplines speak, perceive and define sexuality as the main contributions of how sexuality has been established and stabilized itself.

They also have developed some assumptions that allowed sexuality to be addressed and discussed. The major effects of this were that these systems created the knowledge and understanding practices. These systems contain sexuality that have languages and methods helping individuals to understand their own and other people's sexuality (Lazzarato 2). During the 18th century, sexuality was scrutiny. At this time, the state grew its concern on managing populations. This was aimed at increasing industrialization and urbanization.

The management of populations led to the development of regulations related to managing health. Among the key areas that the state had a concern in are fertility, reproductive health, hygiene, sanitation and sexuality. Some conversations related to a personal conduct also came into being. Individuals categorized themselves in these discussions. They acted as self-surveillance and self-discipline (Foucault 30). When the concepts of sex were developed such as hysteria, sex was defined in three ways.

The one defined belonged to both men and women; secondly, it was defined towards men only, and, thirdly, it was defined concerning women only. The family was the agency and saturation point for sex. During the bourgeoisie era, sexuality of children and adolescents became a problem. The first female sexuality was medicated. This created the need to keep sexuality under a close watch and devising technology for correction (Foucault 32). The family became the first institution to be analyzed in psychiatry.

This created some remedies, hence, appealing to the rescue using learned techniques. During this time, the bourgeoisie had realized that sex was

significant and this was the treasure to be discovered at all costs. One of the first human being to be invested by deployment of sexuality was an idle woman living on the outer edge of the world. In the area she was living, she had to appear as a woman of value. She was assigned a new destiny charged with some parental obligations and conjugal rights. Due to this reason, there a nervous woman emerged.

Hysterization found its anchor point in women (Foucault 38). The adolescents wasted their future substance in secret pleasures. The working classes managed to escape the deployment of sexuality. However, they were subjected to other forms of deployment alliances such as legitimate marriage and fertility. On the other hand, sexuality penetrated Christians in three main stages. The first stage involved the problems of the birth control.

At the end of the eighteenth century, it was discovered that city dwellers were not excluded from art of fooling nature. The second form of sexuality in Christianity occurred when the family was regarded as an instrument of political control and economic regulation. This led to a substantial campaign for the moralization of poorer classes (Lazzarato 6). The third stage occurred in the nineteenth century in juridical and medical institutions formed to control perversions. These institutions were meant to protect race and the society, in the whole.

During this time, sexuality spread in the society in all dimensions. Its spread and the forms it took to spread were not the same everywhere. The medical and judicial authority used was not the same everywhere. Also, medicine used and sexuality functioned differently. These reminders were concerned

with a calendar of their diffusion and invention techniques being extremely influential. They cast much on the doubt of a repressive cycle being an idea of the West.

They brought out clearly that there was no age of sexual restriction (Foucault 38). These events also have made it doubtful that sexuality was homogenous at all levels of the society. According to Foucault, the deployment of sexuality was not established as a principle of pleasure. It appeared that they tried it themselves. The primary concern for capitalists was not to repress sex.

However, their main concern was the body, vigor and decency of a ruling class. This is the reason why the deployment of sex has been established. When the bourgeoisie has invested its own technology of power on sex, they underscored a high political price of its body. Then there was the formation of political ordering life affirming itself. This was the matter in which the bourgeoisie became hegemonic in the 18th century. They believed that the power was obliged to amputate from its body being useless.

And then it would be later to be given a role of reproduction. This was on the contrary as it provided the body with care and protected it (Lazzarato 8). An authoritative discourse related to the personal conduct came into being. Individuals came to evaluate and categorize themselves and others against this discourse in the acts of self-surveillance and self-discipline. Foucault has argued that the factors that motivated power over life and death have changed due to the sovereignty power. During the feudal times, the right to live or die was determined by the sovereign power.

However, this has changed, and people now have the right to live. The sovereign states are more concerned about the power of how people are living. This power has become an essential element in promoting human life (Foucault 40). Biopower refers to the technology of power managing people as a group. The term has been developed by a French scholar, socialist, and historian Michel Foucault. It is mostly emerging in modern states, whereby the political technology has allowed the control of the entire population.

Biopower is simply having power over bodies. The government usually has the concern in regulating the population with the main concern of life like birth, death, production and illness. The technology deployed here aims at making individuals behave in the manner to be efficient productive workers in the society. The local and international modern governments focus on this system in order to control and regulate biopower. The controls act in such areas as sex education at school, legislation to support family life, and the surveys of population fertility (Lazzarato 11).

This new form of power is called biopower. It appears in two forms. Firstly, the power is centered on our bodies like machines. This power optimizes its capabilities. It is well integrated into our systems and has the efficient economic control.

The second form of this power is that it has emerged later into our bodies. It has served as a basis of biological processes. These biological processes include birth and morality, the level of health and life expectancy. This power is argued to be the source capitalism and has contributed to its rise. Through this power, the states are interested in regulating and normalizing power

over life. They are not concerned with punishing and condemning actions of individuals in the society (Lazzarato 12).

Foucault has pointed out that life occurs in the new political battles and economic strategies. The rise of capitalism brought about the introduction of life into the history. From the 18th century, a Western man has been gradually learning what it means to be a living species in the world. The living species included a body, the conditions of existence and probabilities of life as well as the forces that could be modified. The human life had moved to a political struggle. This was new in the human history (Foucault 44).

If power is able to take life, there is what life rejects. In resisting this power, life creates the forms of subjectification as it escapes this control. The introduction of life into the history has presented an opportunity into the new ontology. This has regarded a political subject as ethical and was against traditions of western thoughts understanding it as law. Foucault has examined the power in the concepts of freedom and its capacity as transformed. The new ontology that was legitimized by the introduction of life into the history has made Foucault to defend the subject of freedom.

It also made him establish the relationships existing between him and others. These relationships were meant to him and the moral codes of behaviors ruling the society. The state should accept the thoughts of Foucault since it communicates well the rights of man as well as the transcendental ethics (Lazzarato 13). Biopolitics has taken new forces being

dynamic. These forces of dynamics and the government have some relationships in power that the classical world could not have known.

Since these dynamics makes every organization transcendental into difficulties. Biopower and sovereign power are redefined to us through this dynamism. The development of political economy has led to the introduction of life into the history. The techniques of power have changed when the economy and politics became embedded (Foucault 46). New dispositifs are formed when people begin to think on how to manage them. The management includes their goods and wealth within the family and making the family fortunes prosper.

The political economy being within the system of biopolitics includes dispositifs. It constitutes the forces that bind a social body and the classical political economy. According to Foucault's argument, biopolitics is intertwined with many disciplines including the relation between forces that power the targets projected upon individuals (Lazzarato 13). The political problem of modernity contains many forces that react amongst each other with regard to obedience and submission. When Foucault explained about confession, he described the relationships between a doctor and a patient, a parent and a child, a student and a teacher, an employer and a worker man and woman. These illustrations have revealed the dynamics of a social body and the forces involved into power relations (Lazzarato 14).

Biopolitics coordinates the power relations in the society and extracts the surplus power from individuals in the society. The strategic relations of biopolitics make it hard legitimize and legislate the sovereignty. Biopolitics is

not a true source of power when it begins to act in this manner as described above. According to Foucault, it acts in coordination and determination that concedes biopower. Biopower acts in the manner that its power does not belong to it but it depends on something else (Lazzarato 13). The socialization of forces within the political economy makes sovereign power in a crisis.

The socialization usually forces the power to open up the dispositifs, hence, making biopower integrated into the sovereign power. The emergence of interdependence existing between the government, population and wealth displaced the problems brought out by sovereignty. Foucault has argued that sovereign power is blind and weak. Though it is weak, it does not show any lack of efficiency. Biopolitical power does not displace sovereignty. It mainly displaces its functions, hence, causing the problem of the foundation to be more acute (Lazzarato 10).

The three forces existing within the society are bound in one triangle with a primary target being the population. These forces include the sovereign and disciplined power and the government of power. The main thing that the society needs to consider is not to see sovereign power replaced by the disciplinary society and/or the disciplinary society replaced by the society of government. The best way is to think of how these powers articulate and distribute in the government, the political economy and population (Lazzarato 13). There is a considerable need for the society to put a bigger emphasis on the principles and dynamics regulating socialization, biopower and sovereignty.

The relationships between biopower and political power are more understood when there are some multiple forces acting on them. Foucault has argued that resistance comes first and remains more superior over other forces. The relations of power, therefore, are obliged to change in resistance (Lazzarato 13). Sovereign power is a type of power expressed by a ruler, a king or a president. This power is expressed in the ways being recognized and identified by individuals. This power is identified by consistency, in which it is applied and exercised.

It ensures that law is not violated, hence, imposing some penalties for a breakage of such laws. Sovereign power acts to respond the certain types of circumstances and towards the specific identifiable agents. When sovereign powers are used, the society knows the way they have been acted upon and by whom (Lazzarato 13). The disciplinary power is exercised by individuals working to represent the authority of sovereignty. This rule is based on authority. The disciplinary rule is distinguished by its swiftness and lightness and the thing it acts with.

The power is less visible than sovereign power. There are several differences existing between sovereign power and disciplinary power. Sovereign power operates and functions under specific agents, while disciplinary power operates diffusing its operations to everyone in the society. This type of power comes from everywhere (Lazzarato 14). Another difference is that due to visibility of sovereign power.

It is more prone to resistance than disciplinary power. It is not easy to resist disciplinary power, since it is not visible and not difficult to locate. Sovereign

power affects only a portion of the individual's life, while disciplinary power affects nearly all aspects of human life. This makes individuals subjected to the possibility of surveillance at all times (Lazzarato 14). The disciplinary society operates through the impersonal and invisible gaze.

It does not operate under a direct application of power by a sovereign agent. The invisibility of disciplinary power is in the direct relation to its efficiency. For it to be applicable and efficient, its subject ought to be seen and not to be the power itself. The relationship of invisibility and visibility of disciplinary power is reciprocal. For the subject to be disciplined, it must be potentially visible.

The disciplinary gaze must be invisible so that it becomes effective. The total power of disciplinary power lies on its universal potential being impossible to verify (Lazzarato 14). Not internal forces but external ones that Foucault has named the male government does not govern the functioning and efficiency of politics and economy. The government has become a human technology inherited from a Christian pastoral technique. Liberals have adapted this and changed from the government of souls into the government of men.

The government ought to act on the subjects considered to be free (Lazzarato 2). Through the multiplication of interests of an economic man, he has been integrated into the body of other economic subjects. Reconciliation can only be achieved if there is a revolt against the two-divided world of citizens and bourgeoisie. Foucault has provided a solution to this arguing that the political, economic and ethical powers cannot be united. As a result, there is the need to form a new domain that will be the point of reference.

This point of reference should not focus on the rights of individuals only or some economic subjects.

However, it should focus on the subject that can be governable according to the definition of the new group (Lazzarato 4). Foucault has argued that the society is related to the certain technique of the government. The society, in this case, exists in the form of transactions as sexuality. The society is made up of various powers that are interwoven together. These powers include judicial, economic, cultural and social relations.

Liberalism measure is a form of the government that assumes the market as a test and means of clearness. The liberals argue on the action of prices in the market makes it possible determine the supply and demand. The process politics of the society takes the charge and processes in the market, hence, making a room for the market mechanism (Lazzarato 6). When there is the need to move outside the market, there is the need to move out of labor in order to seize power. For a worker to be an entrepreneur or an investor, one has to step outside labor.

Foucault has used the theory of human capital. He has used it to illustrate the passage of deepening of a logic government. The income of the worker is a result of salary. This brings a problem of growth to the worker and accumulation of wealth. There is usually a change in the analysis of a structure of an individual towards the economic process and the analysis of subjectivity. These analyses do not have the actual system that they should obey (Lazzarato 8) The problem of the material investment cannot be addressed by the growth of politics.

The level of content for the human capital needs to be changed. To act on the human capital, there is a need to change. This is a whole series of dispositifs that are needed to mobilize life. Foucault has redefined biopolitics as the politics of any society and not as the regulation of race. In this case, heterogeneity of dispositifs intervenes with the totality of conditions for life (Lazzarato 9).

According to Foucault, sexuality was crucial as it has linked the politics of a human body and biopolitics of population. Today, sexuality has been detached from its real purpose. It has become an object of various forms of knowledge. Reproduction has become a national and international problem. This is because it has some economic, ecological and political effects. The new politics of abortion has emerged.

It has taken different forms in the national context. In some countries, the reproductive choice has taken the new forms. The couples are working with doctors striving to define infertility as a potential remedy condition that legitimizes the intervention (Rabinow 8). Differing feminisms and political movements have shaped reproductive rights of women throughout the world. The fertility and reproductive rights have been controlled by historical, cultural and political movements.

According to Foucault, the government has the powers that regulate people as a group. In these regulations, there are two poles on how individuals are interacting. The individual body is controlled through discipline, while populations and groups of people are controlled by regulations being within the social body. When the government regulates sexuality and reproduction,

the whole population is being shaped (Rabinow 28). There are some warnings that are related to increase the population in the world. This population leading to pressure on the economies of various countries, hence, there is a strong need for governments to control the population.

The government can achieve this by imposing policies and regulations that slow down the rate of reproduction. These policies are more applicable for the poor and developing countries. It is a necessary requirement in modernization. The regulation of population has been carried out in several countries. For example, one child policy in China has been introduced to regulate their population (Rabinow 12). The policy was introduced in 1978 and applied in 1979.

The main aim of the policy was to alleviate the social, economic and environmental problems in China. This policy has had some positive impacts on the population of the country recording the slow growth of population. Foreigners living in China are exempted from this law. The repressive hypothesis of the West, as described by Foucault, represents sex as something suppressed. It represents it as an object of interrogation, whereby sex liberation is an end itself.

In China, sexuality individualizes and governs bodies differently (Rabinow 13). After the introduction of one child policy in China, there is an agreement that the liberal environment with an access to human materials include some fetal tissues. It is easy that researchers can have an advantage in advancing the research. The Chinese one child policy means that couples will not use their left over embryo for the conception of more than one child. The growth

of economics in this country has been assisted by the means of clinics struggling to control the population (Klein 20).

There has emerged illiberal biopolitics, a term used to control China's population. Illiberal biopolitics holds that regulations of a biological feature of population. It has emerged as a species body and as an object to strategize its political actions. The population has become a problem subjected to both political and scientific powers of the nation. In this kind of state, the current policies of medical practices favor the utilization of leftover embryos in the scientific research.

This is used in reproduction (Klein 23). The Chinese couples that have already obtained one child do not have the right to choose their reproductive embryo to remain in life as it is used as experiment resources in China's national stem and cell program. Biopolitics has turned Chinese policies and ethics to turn the life as resources for medical experiments (Klein 20). Sexuality does not extend to the extreme in the Chinese society as in capitalist western countries. Sexuality is regulated due to health and stability in China.

The government has exercised its power to control the sexual conduct of families. The family has been made as an agent to convey some norms of state into the private sphere.