

## **Power and Ideology in Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci: A Comparative Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

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In devising their theories of power and ideology both Gramsci and Foucault make use of Machiavelli's notion of "relations of force". They therefore diffuse the power relations to the complex mechanisms of society. Power in Gramscian analysis resides in ideology. Or in other words, to be conscious of the complex social network-hegemonic forces-within which an individual realizes himself already generates power. Once a social group is able to modify the ensemble of these relations and make it "common sense", it is creating a hegemonic order. The concept of power is everywhere in Foucault's analyses as well as in his theory. Power is "omnipresent". It comes from everywhere and is produced every moment. Similar to Gramsci, Foucault also sees power as a relation of force that only exists in action. Foucault's basic difference from Gramsci is that the latter saw power relations in terms of binary oppositions (such as the leaders and the led, the rulers and the ruled etc.). For Foucault though, power, as well as the resistance it generates, are diffused and not localized in some points.

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### **Introduction**

For those analysts interested in making sense of the complexities of modern forms of social life, both the French philosopher Michel Foucault and the Italian Marxist thinker Antoni Gramsci are invaluable sources. For Foucault, "power is everywhere", and power relations are embedded in social life. Life in society, literally from the cradle to the grave, inevitably involves actions being exercised on others actions (Smart, 2002).

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Antoni Gramsci on the other hand had a "nuanced" notion of power and believed that power operated mostly at the level of mutual interactions of culture economy and politics within the realm of a "hegemonic" discourse (Jones, 2006). In this paper, a comparative analysis of Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci's conceptions of "power and ideology" will be attempted. In the first part of the paper Gramsci's philosophy will be elaborated with special reference to Machiavelli and Althusser. In the second part the Foucauldian perspective will be analysed with the aim of finding the major points of convergence and divergence between the two.

## I. GRAMSCI

Gramsci was a devoted Marxist and the founder of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). He was, thus, literally "a man of action". As an intellectual leader he participated in the mass proletarian movements during the first world war, and afterwards he involved heavily in Italian politics as a member of the PCI. It is not surprising therefore to find in Gramsci an action oriented political philosophy based mostly on the political developments of his era. He was concerned with the empirical as well as theoretical problems of communism; especially with its failure or non realization in the western world. In that sense the questions of power and ideology also have an empirical basis in Gramsci and can be found in the realm of "politique réelle". Here comes the influence of Machiavelli for Gramsci and the basis of his conception of power embedded in "the relations of force". Power resides in the complex relations of force within society. It is present and observable; it is real. This power is mainly exerted by the dominant bourgeois class through the medium of ideology: by working on the popular mentality via the institutions of civil society and thus establishing a hegemony using the State apparatuses. In Gramsci's conception then power, ideology and the philosophy of action(praxis) are inseparable.

### A. Machiavelli and the Relations of Force

Gramsci's admiration of Macchiavelli stems primarily from the fact that the latter theorized no utopia. Gramsci says that Macchiavelli combined the utopias of his time and scholarly treatise in an artistic and imaginative fashion in the person of a Prince (condottiere) which represents the collective will (Gramsci 1980, 125). Machiavelli simply represents the processes to direct this collective will into political action. In his book, Macchiavelli discusses how a Prince should be if he really existed, to lead its people and found a new State.

This Prince is of course a symbolic construct and can be replaced by any modern formation (such as the political party in Gramsci's conception) to fulfill its tasks. According to Gramsci the modern Prince-the political party-has two main functions: First to formulate a national-popular collective will which he organizes and expresses at the same time and to realize intellectual and moral reforms (Gramsci, 133). Thus for Gramsci, the modern Prince's basic task is to formulate and guide a "collective will" in the autonomous activity of politics.

The concept of will is recurrent in the writings of Gramsci. This will is the basis of all political action and can be meaningful only when it is the will of the many or in other words, the collective will. He says that will is the operative awareness of historical necessity, a "protagonist of a real and effective historical drama"(Gramsci, 130). This means that history evolves through meaningful and willful actions of men. Gramsci has a peculiar voluntarism which puts voluntary actions of men before scientific laws and "positivist fatalism". Gramsci is very much against this philosophic positivism which he thinks,"makes social energies abstracted from man and from will, incomprehensible and absurd"(Gramsci 1975, 41). But Gramsci's voluntarism-if it is appropriate to call it as such-is only meaningful when this will is a collective will. Gramsci clearly rejects the kind of voluntarism advanced by Thomas Carlyle who talks about "heroes or supermen that make history"(Bossche, 2002). Voluntarism or Garibaldiism-as Gramsci uses it-is in fact a word with negative connotations for Gramsci. He says that one must struggle against the "false heroisms" and "pseudo-aristocracies", and stimulate the formation of homogeneous, compact social blocs(Gramsci 1980, 204). In one of his articles in "Il Grido del Popolo" he puts his vision of voluntarism and collective action as such:

"Voluntarism? The word is meaningless, or it is used to mean arbitrariness. Will, in the marxist sense, means consciousness of the ends, which in turn means an exact notion of one's own power and the means to express this in action. Thus it means, first of all, making a distinction, the identification of a class. It means a political life independent from the other class: a compact organization disciplined towards its own specific goals, without deviation or hesitation."(Gramsci 1975, 11) Thus for Gramsci, voluntary action and the will of man is only meaningful when it is the collective will of the many or more precisely, it is the compact will of a class. The will generates power of action only when it is the united, coherent will of a class.

Going back to Machiavelli, Gramsci saw in him a strategist who talks about immediate political actions devoid of moral or religious preoccupations. Machiavelli bases itself on the concrete, observable action of man. "Machiavelli brings everything back to politics, the art of governing men, founding Great States"(Gramsci, 249). For Gramsci though, the first element of politics is that there are always rulers and ruled, leaders and led. "The entire science and art of politics are based on this primordial and irreducible fact"(Gramsci, 144). Thus Gramsci is not after doing away with power relations in the political life of men. Neither does he conceive of politics as being capable of perfect equality. Some will always dominate; a *binary* relation of power will always persist.

Gramsci borrowed from Machiavelli the idea that power relations are embedded in the relations of force. He developed this conception to arrive at a three-dimensional power relations that can be distinguished in those relations of force in the society:

1. A relation of social forces independent of human will i.e. social classes which have specific functions in the production process.
2. A relation of political forces. This refers to the degree of homogeneity, self-consciousness, and politicization of the social classes. There are various degrees of this self-consciousness from simple awareness of subjective and immediate interests to the point where one becomes conscious of his objective, class interests. Nevertheless this is not automatic and requires an intellectual and moral unity (primary problematique in Gramsci's theory of hegemony).
3. A relation of military forces. Gramsci also terms it "politico-military" forces as he gives it the example of State's military forces. This refers to the oppressive apparatus of the State (Gramsci 1980, 180-183).

Thus Gramsci posits in his power conception a three-dimensional network within the society which consists of relations of force between social classes, upon and around man's self-awareness, and against State's politico-military apparatuses.

## B. Philosophy and Ideology

"All men are philosophers". That's how Gramsci starts his analysis of philosophical thinking. All men are "spontaneous philosophers" as long as they have specific categories to express themselves in their daily lives.

But some people may reach the most advanced thought in the world if they can differentiate between "common" and "good" sense. This differentiation between common and good sense is present in most of Gramsci's work. Roughly speaking, "common sense" means for Gramsci "the incoherent set of generally held assumptions and beliefs common to any society" (Gramsci, 323), while "good sense" is "the philosophy of criticism and the superseding of religion and common sense" (Gramsci, 326). How can one reach this "good sense" and the most advanced thought in the world? According to Gramsci one must learn to think coherently and critically. In other words, the episodic and haphazard way of producing mental labour is a waste of man's intellectual energy. Gramsci insists on coherence and criticism as the only way for avoiding conformism. The emphasis Gramsci puts on "unity and coherence" (as in the case of formation of the collective will) in philosophical thought is apparent here.

An other important aspect of philosophy for Gramsci is that philosophy and politics-political action-are inseparable. He says that philosophy cannot be divorced from politics because,

"...a social group may have its conception of the world...but this same group has for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own . and it affirms this conception verbally and believes itself to be following it, because this is the conception which follows in normal times...This is when the conduct is not independent and autonomous, but submissive and subordinate" (Gramsci, 327).

This passage also throws some light on Gramsci's conception of "common sense". It is basically an ideological construct which is accepted by all-even contradictory-segments of the society because it is the discourse that follows in "normal times".

The diagnosis and the critique of the "common sense" is at the heart of Gramsci's "philosophy of praxis". "It must be a criticism of the common sense basing itself however initially on common sense to demonstrate that all men are philosophers. . .and making critical an already existing activity" (Gramsci, 331). We said at the beginning that Gramsci is a man of action and is mainly concerned with the empirical as well as theoretical problems of communism.

The philosophy of praxis can be seen as an extension of Marxist-Leninist tradition which tried to put socialism on a non-utopian, materialist basis. Gramsci's theories are formulated to be put into action. In other words there must be a unity of theory and practice which he terms as "praxis". Unification of theory and practice can be realized only in the sphere of ideologies. One must be able to develop a critical understanding of self, must be aware of his being part of a hegemonic force to "arrive to a further progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice will finally be one"(Gramsci, 333). Thus the philosophy of praxis is practicable only in the sphere of relations of political forces; in other words only with the condition of an advanced political consciousness. The aim of political philosophy (action) is to lead a cultural battle "to transform the popular mentalities and to diffuse the philosophical innovations which will demonstrate themselves to be historically true"(Gramsci, 348). This shows that the battle the intellectual should lead must be upon the mentality of average men; his way of conceiving the truth. The existence of an objective and absolute truth in a Platonic sense that is to be discovered and taught to the masses is apparent in Gramsci. The test for the objectivity of the truth is the extent that it becomes historically and socially universal.

Gramsci owes certainly much of his insights to previous Italian thinkers. One of them is Croce and the position taken up by Croce in analysing philosophy and ideology is duplicated in Gramsci's work. In both analysis "philosophy and ideology finally become one and philosophy is revealed as nothing other than a practical instrument for organization and action"(Gramsci, 270). In Gramsci ideology was historically an aspect of "sensationalism". The origins of ideas could only be sensations. But sensationalism could easily be associated with religious faith and extreme beliefs in the "power of the Spirit". Thus the "science of ideas" shifted its meaning to "system of ideas".

For Gramsci ideology itself must be analysed historically, in the terms of the philosophy of praxis, as a *superstructure* (Gramsci, 376). At this point Gramsci goes on to elaborate the Marxist conception of ideology while at the same time criticizing it. He mainly criticizes the negative meaning assumed by the marxists in terms of the potentials of ideology, that ideology is useless and it can have no determining effects on structural relations. On the contrary, as long as ideologies are accepted as historical necessities to organize and direct human masses, they have a psychological validity and determine the consciousness of men and this determination may have a long lasting effect vis a vis the structural relations. This can be accepted as a major contribution of Gramsci to traditional Marxism.

He systematized what Marx put forward when he talked about the forces of popular beliefs and saw the ideology and the superstructural relations as more or less independent arenas of struggle; or in other words not easily reducible to the conflicts at the structural level.

To throw some light to the power and functioning of ideology in Gramsci, it may be useful to consider briefly Gramsci's conception of man which can give us some clues on the ontological basis of his theory. For Gramsci there is no definite human nature. Man is the "complex of social relations". Thus man is not static, it changes with the social relations, it *becomes*. This becoming does not start from unity but goes towards unity. The humanity found in each individual is composed of three elements: 1.the individual himself; 2.other men; 3.the natural world. These are not mechanical; they are active and conscious:

"One can change himself, modify himself to the extent that he changes and modifies the complex relations of which he is the hub. In this sense the real philosopher cannot be other than the politician who modifies the ensemble of these relations...To create one's personality means to acquire consciousness of them...But this is not simple.To be conscious of them already modifies them. Even the necessary relations in so far as they are known to be necessary take on a different aspect. In that sense *knowledge is power* (Gramsci, 352-53).<sup>2</sup> Power in Gramscian analysis resides in ideology. Or in other words, to be conscious of the complex social network-hegemonic forces-within which an individual realizes himself already generates power. Once a social group is able to modify the ensemble of these relations and make it "common sense", it is creating a hegemonic order.

### C. Hegemony and the State

Life experiences played an important role in the making of Gramsci's political philosophy. The experience of fascism supported by much of the working-class is one of those important experiences which pushed him to revise the Marxist-Leninist theory of State, adding some new concepts such as "the bourgeois hegemony in civil society".

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<sup>2</sup> Here we find again some traces of Plato. Gramsci has a conception of unity and coherence of the social totalities paraliel to the man's soul, akin to Plato's justice in the State.

Gramsci defines the State as "the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules"(Carnoy 1986, 65). For Gramsci the State has basically an "educative" and "formative" function. This educative function of the State-later adopted and expanded by Althusser-serves to create new and higher types of civilizations. It trains people to adapt the morality and mentality of the masses to the logic of the production process. The main problematique of the State is to incorporate the will of each single individual into the collective will turning their necessary consent and collaboration from "coercion" to "freedom"(Gramsci 1980, 242). This means that the State functions so as to create "conformist" citizens who internalize the most restrictive aspects of the "civil life", and accept them as their natural "duties" without having any resentment. The major instrument of the State in creating the new type of civilization and disseminating certain attitudes is the Law.

But this Law -in a Foucauldian terminology- does not only repress and restrict but also produces and rewards. It reinforces those "praise-worthy" activities of the citizens just as it punishes criminal actions. In that sense the Law operates mostly at the superstructural level. (Gramsci, 247). From this positive, productive conception of Law stems the importance of the "civil society" and its relatedness to the public sphere. Those institutions of "civil society" (i.e. school, church, cultural media etc), do not fail within the restrictive domain of the Law. Nevertheless they are still operated by the Law as the quality and the range of their activities, in other words their "raison d'etre" is determined by it.

Gramsci classifies the activities of those civil institutions as "legally neutral". But nevertheless he goes on to assert that, "they operate without sanctions or compulsory obligations but still exerts a collective pressure...and obtains objective results in the evolution of customs, ways of thinking, morality etc."(Gramsci, 242).

According to Gramsci, the evolution of the civil society coincides with the colonial expansion of Europe. After 1870 internal and international mechanisms of State became more complex and massive and the classical weapons of the oppressed classes became obsolete. The element of movement (the takeover of the restrictive State apparatus) is now only partial with respect to the massive structures of the modern democracies and associations of civil society. The bourgeoisie did something that other dominant classes in previous historical stages did not: to expand and enlarge its sphere of domination *ideologically*.



It assimilated the entire social network to its cultural and economic ideology. The bourgeoisie used the State apparatus to realize this ideological domination. But the State apparatus, this time, did not only serve to protect and promote the economic interests of the dominant class as is constantly assumed by the orthodox Marxists. It operated on the superstructural level to create a "common sense" in congruence with the necessity of the new production system. Although *at the last instance* all of these operations have material basis in the necessities of the capitalist production process, the State through the bourgeois hegemony in civil society launched an independent ideological "war" (very successful indeed) to penetrate the consciousness of ordinary man.

To repeat, this hegemony in Gramscian terms means "the ideological predominance of bourgeois values and norms over the subordinate classes which accept them as "normal"(Carnoy 1986, 66). In analysing the concept of hegemony, we have to differentiate between two levels of the State: the civil and political society. The civil society refers to those institutions which seem to be private(outside the sphere of the State control) and political society is what we ordinarily call the State(with all its juridico-military repressive apparatuses). But as it was said above the civil society in fact is not outside the domain of the State, because it is created and operated by the same bourgeois Law. The only difference is that the institutions of the political society fail within the "coercive", "punitive" aspects of the Law, whereas the organisms of civil society constitutes in a Foucauldian terminology the "positive", "productive" aspects of the same bourgeois Law.

To put it in an other way, the civil society is the mechanism of domination which functions through "consensus" whereas the political society functions through "force". The major contribution of Gramsci to Marxist thought is that he developed the idea that without having the consensus of the masses, in other words, without winning "the ideological battle", the control of the means of production or the repressive apparatus of the State is futile.

"Gramsci raised man's thought(consciousness) to a newly prominent place in the philosophy of praxis. Control of consciousness is as much or more an arena of political struggle as the control of the forces of production"(Carnoy, 75). Three words can be said to summarize Gramsci's notion of power: Power is ideology.

#### D. A Materialist Conception of Ideology: Althusser

Gramsci's notion of the relative independence of ideology as an arena of struggle and its determining effects on man's political consciousness was later taken up and elaborated by Althusser. Althusser, in a way, systematized what was implicit in Gramsci. He based ideology on social formations and the dissemination of the particular bourgeois ideology on the Ideological State Apparatuses (a more broadened and massive conception of civil society).

Althusser developed the most essential points of his analysis in his famous essay "Ideology and The State's Ideological Apparatuses". For Althusser, in order to perpetuate a mode of production, it is not sufficient to renew the means of production; what is necessary indeed, is a reproduction of the conditions of production. A social formation must in the first instance create the conditions for the reproduction of: a. the forces of production and b. the relations of production. In other words, the material reproduction of the tools to transform the nature is not sufficient; there must be a "material reproduction of those" who use the tools as well. That means "reproduction at the domain of ideas", ideological reproduction.

Althusser's most important contribution-if we can call it as such-to Gramscian concept of ideology and his biggest originality as a philosopher is this "materialization" of ideology.

Ideology is not what Marx called in his "German Ideology" a dream-like concept which is meaningless and negative vis a vis the relations of production. Ideology is real, it determines the way a human being acts, thinks, produces. That is the reason why ideology is "material"; it is directly linked to the production process. It is the moral, mental incitement of men to produce in a certain fashion. Those means through which an ideology is materialized are what Althusser calls "Ideological State Apparatuses". An ideology is always present both at the level of apparatuses and their practices; this presence, is as we said, material (Althusser, 2014).

The concept of "Ideological State Apparatuses"-where and by means of which an ideology is materialized-is similar to Gramscian notion of civil society. But Althusser analyses them in a more rigorous and schematic fashion and assigns to them "the" most important function in the reproduction of the system. Parallel to Gramsci, Althusser explicitly differentiates between State's repressive and ideological apparatuses.

The repressive apparatus of the State-which was wrongly conceived as the only form of State by Marx-consists of what Gramsci called "political society" i.e. the Government, Army, Police, Courts, Prisons etc. They have "coercive" power over masses. The Ideological State Apparatuses on the other hand uses "ideological" power to voluntarily submit masses. This voluntary submission requires the use of the "mechanisms of discipline" in a Foucauldian sense to assure the "docility" and "conformity" of people. These mechanisms of internal discipline are mostly used within the school system and the family. Those are in fact the most important ideological apparatuses of the State. Althusser sees the educational system -again in line with Gramsci-as the most powerful ISA. The novelty of Althusser in formulating his theory of "ISA" is his strong emphasis on "family" as an ideological apparatus of the State. This can be partly explained by the importance Althusser accords to the family in the ideological subjugation of individuals through "disciplinary mechanisms"(child education as they call). An other reason for Althusser's emphasis on family may be the role of the latter-together with the school and other ISA-in the "subjectification"(mental enslavement) of individuals: the metaphysical death of man.

In contrast to Gramsci's emphasis on will as the basis of all philosophical actions, Althusser totally rejects the existence of an independent human will that can function outside the superstructural(ideological) determinants. In that sense, he metaphorically kills the man-a century after Nietzsche had killed "the God". Althusser's rejection of humanism stems from his conception of ideology.

Ideology is not the mental reflection of man's interaction with the reality. It is the mental reflection of only man's *fictitious* interaction with the reality. Thus man is constantly living-in a Platonic sense-in a world of "doxas" and is not capable of grasping the truth as in Plato's "allegory of the cave". But for Althusser this imprisonment in the cave of doxas(ideologies) is perpetual as "man by his nature is an ideological animal". Man can never be a free individual; by his nature he is bound to remain a "subject" of some ideology. The ideas of man as he conceives and expresses them are the material constructs of some ideological apparatus and are defined by the rituals of that apparatus (Althusser, 2014). In Martin Carnoy's words: "Ideology recognizes individuals as subjects, subjects them to the "subject" of ideology itself (i.e. God, Capital, the State etc.), guarantees that everything is "really" so, and that on the condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be all right"(Carnoy 1986, 92).

In a Foucauldian terminology then-though very antithetical to Foucault- "ideology is everywhere" for Althusser.

## II. Michel Foucault

Gramsci was basically coming from the Marxist tradition which would "at the last instance" take everything back to the production relations. Eventhough he assigned a relative independence to the superstructural elements and put the hegemony of the bourgeois civil society at the core of his analysis, he was nevertheless a follower of Marx in the sense that he tried to base his analysis on a broader political theory; to that of Marx's. Michel Foucault, the "unclassifiable" famous french historian, on the other hand, chose Nietzsche rather than Marx as his point of departure. Foucault mainly borrowed from Nietzsche his "genealogy of morals". For Foucault, Nietzsche "is the philosopher of power, a philosopher who managed to think of power without having to confine himself within a political theory"(Foucault 1980, 53). Foucault rejected the notion of a centralized scientific discourse. Through the use of "genealogy" (deconstruction of the theoretical, formal, unitary scientific discourse), he tried to eliminate the scientific hierarchization of knowledge and promote what he calls "local knowledge".

Foucault's main question was to "theorize power". Paraphrasing Giddens we can say that Foucault, like Nietzsche, "put power before truth".

Power is everywhere and man cannot escape from the complex relations of power that make up the society. In the following paragraphs I will try to elaborate Foucault's conception of power and ideology vis a vis Gramsci and try to find their points of convergence-if there are any. Suffice is to say at the beginning that both were admirers of Machiavelli. Foucault like Gramsci adopted Machiavelli's concept of "relations of force" to do away with the system of Law-and-Sovereign. But Foucault went one step further. He tried to eliminate all conceptions of "fundamental source of power" Says Foucault:

"It is in this sphere of force relations that we must try to analyze the mechanisms of power... And if it is true that Machiavelli was among the few who conceived the power of the Prince in terms of force relationships, perhaps we need to go one step further, do without the persona of the Prince, and decipher power mechanisms on the basis of a strategy that is immanent in force relationships"(Foucault 1978, 97).

This is the basic difference between Foucault and Gramsci that we should keep in mind in starting our analysis: Gramsci is a Marxist and does in fact locate power in some centralized agency while Foucault "dares" to follow the Nietzschean tradition and diffuses power relations into the "very grains of individuals".

#### A. Why Study Power? The Subject and Power

Foucault hardly talks about the "why" of power. He is generally concerned with the "how" of power and concentrates on "bringing to light power relations, locating their position, finding out point of applications and methods used" (Foucault, 211). Nevertheless all his laborious research on power has a goal: to decipher the way man is being turned into a subject through power relations. Contrary to Althusser's almost totalizing view of human nature which makes man a perpetual subject of some ideological construct, Foucault tries to locate the "modes of objectification which transforms human beings into subjects" (Foucault, 208) to formulate some points of resistance. Those three modes of objectifications which forms the basis of Foucault's inquiry are:

1. The objectification of man in the so called scientific paradigms. That includes the objectification of the producing subject; i.e. the man who labours as a locus of scientific analysis.
2. The objectification of man in "dividing practices" such as the mad and the sane, the criminal and the innocent etc.
3. The self-subjectivizing of man. How man learns to call himself as the subject of some practice (i.e. sexual subject). This mode of objectivizing is very similar to Althusser's general theory of "ideology-subject":

"This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have recognized in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects" (Foucault, 212).

The forms of resistance against those objectivizing power relations are generally in the form of "anti-authority" struggles.

These resistances (which are everywhere just like the power relations) aim at asserting to man the right to be different. For Foucault, man can become an "individual". As long as he can be conscious of those power relations (which he generally is, as consciousness is not a major concern for Foucault) he can resist them. In that sense, Foucault is a "humanist" -in an Althusserian perspective-as he gives weight to human will, and the capacity to avoid those objectivizing power relations.

According to Foucault, there are historically three types of struggles: struggle against exploitation, domination, and subjection. Although all of them are present in today's social system, struggle against subjection has become more important. The reason why this kind of struggle emerged in the society can be explained by the emergence of the Bourgeois State in the 16th century. Obviously, Foucault separates the struggle against domination and subjection from the "major contradiction" in society, that is exploitation. He treats them as if they were completely independent categories. In his analysis of struggle against subjection, Foucault for the first-and the last- time defines the State as a central source of power. He maintains that today the State has both totalizing and individualizing power. Similar to Gramscian theory of hegemony, Foucault says that the Western State has integrated old techniques of power from Christianity.

One of the most important aspects of this-as Foucault calls-"pastoral" power is that "it cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It is linked with a production of truth, the truth of the individual himself"(Foucault, 214).

In fact Foucault implicitly follows the same line of argument in the "History of Sexuality" where he shows how a new political ordering of life was possible through the medicalization of sex as it became a concern for the State because of the need for "infinitesimal surveillance" of individuals and a particular "economy" of the body. Conscious or not, when he talks about this "totalizing" power of the State which tries to produce a peculiar regime of truth, Foucault almost duplicates Gramsci's theory of Hegemonic civil society and Althusser's "ISA". What he talks about is mere "ideology"- although Foucault would definitely not call it as such-centered around the State's non-repressive apparatus. I believe that Foucault's deliberate choice of avoiding such terminology is linked to his wish to break up with the "all pervasive" para-Marxist approaches of his era and his confusion and/or lack of an adequate political theory concerning the State.

## B. The Repressive Hypothesis and the State

What is said above needs some elaboration. Leaving the question of ideology aside for the time being, let's focus on Foucault's conception of State. First of all Foucault is not a "political scientist" in the Gramscian sense. It means that he is not particularly interested in devising an all comprehensive theory of State. Nevertheless one can see in almost all the works of Foucault some concern with the State. He often remarks-as we will see below-that it is wrong to locate power in the State apparatus, meaning that power shouldn't be equated with "Law and repression". This means that the "State" as such means for Foucault in a Weberian sense an entity with a legitimate power of coercion.

What Foucault describes here is what Gramsci would call "political society". At the "discursive level" Foucault seems to equate the State only with the "political society" and thus rejects the notion of repressive power located in the State.

But as we showed at the end of the previous section, when one carefully reads Foucault, it becomes obvious that the State has some other kinds of power (as he calls "pastoral") in the society to assure the disciplinary normalization of individuals, establishing a network of control through the medicalization of the body and so forth, that Foucault for some obscure reason, prefers not to explicitly include in his "treatment" of State.

Thus, when Foucault says that "to put it (power) in terms of the State means to continue posing it in terms of Law and sovereignty" what he has in mind is only the repressive apparatus of the State(i.e. Army, police, penal institutions etc).But it is apparent from Foucault's own writings that the State is much more than this: it needs the soul of its citizens to create a regime of truth that can not be done through coercion. Therefore we shouldn't think that what Foucault says is basically different from that of Gramsci. Gramsci is also against the mere use of "the repressive hypothesis" that is the political society as a locus of power. But he explicitly includes in his description of the State those institutions of civil society that truly diffuse power and creates regimes of truth... This subtle analysis is deliberately lacking in Foucault. Thus we should see that as long as "the repressive hypothesis" is concerned Foucault and Gramsci converge. The difference is not one of content but only of terminology.

The repressive hypothesis for Foucault has to do with equating power only with repression, punishment, coercion; with the sovereign person of the King-whose head hadn't been cut off yet. This juridico-discursive conception of power only establishes negative power relations. It insists on the rules, it prohibits, and censors(Foucault 1978, 83-85). Foucault says that as long as power is located in the State apparatus(see the remarks above) it will be conceived as negative and repressive:

"To pose the problem in terms of the State means to continue posing it in terms of sovereign and sovereignty, that is to say in terms of law. If one describes all these phenomena of power dependent on the State apparatus, this means grasping them as essentially repressive... State is superstructural in a whole series of power networks (*what then creates them? Shall we take them as God-given?*) that invest the body, sexuality, the family, knowledge, technology etc.."(Foucault 1980, 122).

Foucault rejects the idea of concentration of power in the State. He says that the "spirit of Hobbes' Leviathan is dead". Power is not localized in the State apparatus and "that nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatuses, on a much more minute and everyday level are not also changed"(Foucault, 60). That's what Gramsci also means: the control of the political society changes nothing, the hegemonic institutions within the civil society (what Foucault calls "mechanisms of power on a much more minute and everyday level") must also be done away with.

### C. Power and Ideology

The concept of power is everywhere in Foucault's analyses as well as in his theory. He defines power as "the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society; power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with..."(Foucault 1978, 93). Power is "omnipresent". It comes from everywhere and is produced every moment. Similar to Gramsci, Foucault also sees power as a relation of force that only exists in action. Power intrinsic to those relations of force has some basic features:

1. Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared; it is exercised from many different points.
2. Power relations are not exterior to other relations(i.e. economic). Relations of power are not superstructural.



3. Power comes from below; there is no binary opposition between the rulers and the ruled.
4. Power relations are both intentional and non subjective. There is no power without aim and objective but there are no "headquarters" of power either (Foucault, 94).

Foucault's basic difference from Gramsci is that the latter saw power relations in terms of binary oppositions (such as the leaders and the led, the rulers and the ruled etc.). For Gramsci as well, power can only be discovered in the relations of force within the society but it is localized in some points (in the symbolic persona of the Prince). For Foucault though, power as well as the resistance it generates are diffused and not localized in some points.

In formulating his "theory of power" Foucault sets for himself some methodological constraints. He prefers to start analysing power from the points where it produces its real effects. In other words he engages in an "ascending" analysis of power. Foucault separates ideology from the analysis of power. He maintains that power puts into circulation apparatuses of knowledge which are not ideological constructs (Foucault, 102). This is the major point of divergence between Gramsci and Foucault: While Gramsci sees power as directly linked to the ideological hegemony of the dominant classes, Foucault separates the apparatuses of knowledge that power creates from ideology. We will now try to elaborate this point.

We should first start by analysing what Foucault means by "ideology". According to Foucault, ideology is a level of "speculative discourse" that cannot explain the great technologies of power:

"....The philosophy of the ideologists as a theory of signs and the individual genesis of sensations, but also a theory of the social composition of interests-Ideology being a doctrine of apprenticeship, but also a doctrine of contracts and the regulated formation of the social body-no doubt constituted the abstract discourse in which one sought to coordinate these two techniques of power in order to construct a general theory of it. In point of fact however, they (bio-power and discipline) were not to be joined at the level of a *speculative discourse*, but in the form of concrete arrangements..." (Foucault, 140).

Ideology for Foucault is not in the realm of material realities. It is an abstraction. Foucault sees ideology in an "anachronic" way; he deliberately uses the categories of the 18th century thinkers who defined ideology as the "sciences of ideas". It is drastically different from Althusser's conception of ideology as having material roots within the social formations. Thus for Foucault an abstract notion such as ideology can not explain the real effects of power relations in the society.

An other important point in Foucault's treatment of ideology is the importance he accords to the effects of power on the body. The power exerted over the body is more real than the power to transform-in the Gramscian sense- the popular mentalities. Says Foucault:

"...As regards Marxism, I'm not one of those who try to elicit the effects of power at the level of ideology. Indeed I wonder whether before one poses the question of ideology, it wouldn't be more materialist to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it. Because what troubles me with those analyses which prioritise ideology is that there is always a presupposed human subject endowed with a consciousness which power is then thought to seize on" (Foucault 1980, 58).

Thus for Foucault there is no human subject whose consciousness is more prone to the effects of ideological power than is his body to the effects of physical force. The production of the "knowledge" of the body is more of a mastery for conquering the individual. What Foucault calls the "political technology of the body" operates micro-physics of power around the bodies to subjugate man (Foucault 1995, 26). The road to man's soul passes from his flesh and bones rather than his mind.

## Conclusion

In this paper I tried to analyse Foucault's and Gramsci's conceptions of power and ideology on a comparative perspective. The major points of this comparative analysis can be summarized as follows:

Both Gramsci and Foucault make use of Machiavelli's notion of "relations of force". They therefore diffuse the power relations to the complex mechanisms of society. They try to implement a "positive analysis" of power. Power is not only a negative conception; power produces. In the case of Gramsci power produces ideology (and vice versa) and for Foucault power produces apparatuses of knowledge.

Therefore they both minimize the hypothesis that State's mechanisms of repression are the only generator of power. Although Foucault, in his explicit analysis totally rejects the State as a source of power, he still talks about the pastoral power of the State as a form totalizing power. In that sense his treatment of the State is not remote to that of Gramsci's civil society.

Gramsci and Foucault basically diverge at their treatment of ideology. While for Gramsci to have access to people's consciousness is an enormous power and in that sense power is ideology, for Foucault ideology is an "abstraction" that cannot explain the real effects of power in society.

Foucault gives almost no importance to the mental enslavement of people. What counts in objectivizing individuals is the power exerted on people's bodies. Contrary to Gramsci, Foucault puts emphasis to the particular technology of power that produces knowledge on people's body.

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Antonio Francesco Gramsci (UK: /ˈɛːrɑːmɛfi/, US: /ˈɛːrɛːmɛfi/; Italian: [anˈtɔ̃ːfɛsko ɛˈramɛfi] (listen); 22 January 1891 – 27 April 1937) was an Italian Marxist philosopher, journalist, linguist, writer and politician. He wrote on philosophy, political theory, sociology, history and linguistics. He was a founding member and one-time leader of the Communist Party of Italy and was imprisoned by Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime. Michel Foucault, the French postmodernist, has been hugely influential in shaping understandings of power, leading away from the analysis of actors who use power as an instrument of coercion, and even away from the discreet structures in which those actors operate, toward the idea that "power is everywhere", diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and "regimes of truth" (Foucault 1991; Rabinow 1991). His work marks a radical departure from previous modes of conceiving power and cannot be easily integrated with previous ideas, as power is diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them (Gaventa 2003: 1). Download Citation | The Concept of Power in Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault: A Comparative Analysis | The concept of power has been the focus of discussion of many thinkers that attempted to understand who are their agents, how it is created and | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. In this scenario, Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt have its respective and relevant conceptions of power and how it is expressed in our contemporary society. For the first thinker, power is everywhere and it is exercised in everyday life. For the German philosopher, power is expressed collectively. Therefore, the main goal of this essay is to analyse and compare their respective conceptions of power, especially how they understand resistance and violence. Gramsci's hegemony notion has great influence on human fields and rich in relation and involves complexity in theorization. However the two have slightly different explanation of these fields. The different opinions of Gramsci and Friedrich are as discussed below: Overview of the two theorists' idea Italian, Antonio Gramsci developed ideas from the society pertaining issues concerning members. Gramsci had unfavorable childhood concerning economic and social status. In 20th century, He was affected together with his family by bureaucracy. He handed his life to short existence after punishment a ANTONIO GRAMSCI. Is power simply a matter of domination and resistance? If ideology were merely some abstract, imposed set of notions, if our social and political and cultural ideas and assumptions and habits were merely the result of specific manipulation, of a kind of overt training which might be simply ended or withdrawn, then the society would be very much easier to move and to change than in practice it has ever been or. Gramscian analysis directs us away from a preoccupation with the text alone and towards an understanding that texts are. In the next section, I outline a brief case study, showing how this web of power and meaning coheres around a single media event, and how this may be related to Gramsci's major theoretical concerns.