

# ***A Research on Foucault; with an Emphasis on the Concept of Power***

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## ***Abstract:***

*Michel Foucault (1926-1984), one of the most influential contemporary thinkers, with his death in 1984 remained an irrecoverable gap in the intellectual scene. A few thoughts in this century have influenced history, philosophy, literature, social sciences and even psychiatry as much as Foucault. He developed a new insight to knowledge and power, objectivity and subjectivity, and the historical cognition and evolution, and the social role of these concepts as a result of intellectual interaction with his ancestors, including Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Sartre. Thereby, he transformed the basis of political knowledge in the West and criticized the idea of criticism in a form independent of utopias and political ideology.*

*Foucault offers a new definition of power. In his opinion, power is not something possessed by a specific person or people, but we all serve power, and there is power everywhere. Therefore, power should not be sought only in its official forms (state, ruling government), because power exists in the smallest components of society and the finest human relations (microphysics of power). Some critics believe that Foucault offers an overarching concept of power; if power is everywhere, then its presence or absence makes no difference, and basically, it would not be possible to resist against power. In this paper, we are going to look at the generalities of Foucault, and his interpretation of the concept and place of power.*

*The present study is a fundamental research which is carried out using a qualitative method based on content analysis. The data collection method was library research.*

***Keywords:*** *Power, Archaeology, Foucault, Genealogy, Phenomenology, Structuralism.*

## ***Introduction:***

*One of the most fundamental concepts in political science is to examine the concept of power and its application in politics. It has been examined from various dimensions in the works of many scholars. One of the controversial meanings in the discourse of the West and the Islamic Republic is the attitude toward and application of the concept of power in politics and government. Many scholars have conducted a review of the concept and nature of power. One of these contemporary thinkers who is known to the Iranians is French scholar, Michel Foucault. He traveled to some cities of Iran during the Islamic Revolution and addressed the subject of this phenomenon. He has also referred to the uprising of Ashura in relation to research on the Islamic Revolution.*

*Michel Foucault is undoubtedly one of the thinkers of recent decades who have had an impact on the intellectual currents of his lifetime and beyond. Some consider him as a radical critic of modern thought, and some go beyond a critic and know him as the founder of the post-modernist intellectual current.*

*Hence, every look at his writings considers Foucault's thoughts as a complex of different intellectual currents. The major frontiers of the Foucault's worldview consist of phenomenology, hermeneutics, structuralism, and Marxism. Foucault's thought differs deeply from all these intellectual tendencies and recognizes the unique and disparate nature of historical events (Dreyfus, 2008: 14).*

*Foucault's main analysis of the basic forms of thoughts and ideas is based on the relations of power and knowledge through which they have become the subject. He examines the trends through which the rationality is created*

*and applied to human subjects in order to convert this subject into different forms of knowledge.*

*His main question is how different forms of scientific discourse are created as a system of power relations. The present study attempts to briefly discuss some of Foucault's main ideas and his analysis of the concept of power following the concept of discourse from the perspective of a critical thinker. One of Foucault's main ideas in writing his works seems to be the opposition to the history of ideas and his attempt to make it ineffective. According to the assumptions of the history of ideas, which leads towards humanism and idealism due to the reliance on expressions and manifestations, there is a subject of identification for history called a human being. The history of ideas addresses the essential and substantive continuities in order to sanctify this man (Dunnell, 55: 2001). Foucault intends to bring together different historical moments against this continuity, and thereby disclose the discontinuities in knowledge. In another work, Foucault's discipline of objects (humanistic Archaeology) deals with the analysis of discourse and discursive relations; his main concern is the possibility of the emergence of man as the subject of knowledge. Contrary to his previous works, he does not discuss non-discursive, institutional and social conditions, but discusses the rules of thinking practices (i.e., the internal rules and relations, and the process of formation and change of discourses and intellectual systems in the humanities). He has compared forms of knowledge in three historical periods (Renaissance, classical, and modern) and believes in the existence of the intellectual structure, or configuration of the knowledge, or special episteme of each period. He admits that evolution is not an evolution from one epoch to another, but has its own episteme! Foucault pursues the*

*rejection of the possibility of human sciences in modern episteme, which is a three-dimensional space of mathematical and natural sciences, philosophical reflection, and biological, linguistic and productive sciences. His purpose of human sciences within these three dimensions is unstable. In his conception, the secondary and indisputable nature of the humanities is in an epistemic position (Dreyfus, 65: 2008). In generally, archaeology implies the personality of the human being on which these disciplines focus.*

*In Foucault's analysis, power means an action that causes change or direction to the behavior of others. From this perspective, power is the general structure of actions that affect others' possible actions. Power encourages, facilitates or makes it difficult, restricts or explicitly forbids; however, power is always the way of acting on the subject of action because the subject acts or is able to act. In this paper, Foucault's perception and analysis of the concept of power will be discussed.*

### **1. Michel Foucault:**

*Michel Foucault (1926-1984), a French philosopher, is one of the most prominent postmodern thinkers. Although he does not consider himself a postmodern thinker, his works and writings are clearly postmodern. Foucault was born in Poitiers in 1926, and after graduation, he went to "Ecole Normal Superior" to read philosophy. In 1948, he received a bachelor's degree in philosophy. Upon graduation, his intellectual interests changed from philosophy to psychology and history. In the 1950s, he received a diploma in psychological pathology and a bachelor's degree in psychology. Foucault wrote his doctoral thesis titled "Research in the History of Madness," later published as "Madness and Insanity: History of Madness in the Classical Age" (1961).*

*In 1964, Foucault became a professor of philosophy at the University of Clermont-Ferrand. At the same time, he wrote the book "Words and Things," which was translated into English as "The Order of the Objects." In 1970, he was appointed as the Professor of History of Systems of Thoughts at Clare de France. Foucault published these works until his death in 1984: Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1975), The Will to Knowledge (1976), The Use of Pleasure (1984) and The Care of the Self (1984).*

*However, the main question raised here is who Foucault is? The problem with this area is that Foucault cannot be considered a thinker with special intellectual interest and thus, it is impossible to consider his thoughts in a particular context. Is he more like philosophers? The first answer is positive. He spent many years of his youth learning philosophy and taught philosophy as well; but why did he write about the history of madness and medicine, prison, and gender rather than Plato, Aristotle, Descartes or Kant? Is he more a historian than a philosopher? The answer here is also positive. He is the historian of ideas and spent more than a decade on analyzing historical methods in the field of political thought. However, he has a different and distinct approach to other historians. Also, Foucault is known as a "multidimensional" thinker because he has changed his intellectual orientation and is influenced by various intellectual traditions. In various interpretations, he is called "unacceptable child of structuralism," "archaeologist of the western culture," "absurdist" and "terminator of common social sciences."*

## **2. Foucault's Ideas, Works, and Thoughts:**

*Foucault's works are divided into three main parts according to the content:*

*A part that is influenced by Heidegger's hermeneutics, the peak of which has been revealed in the book "The History of Madness."*

*The other part can be called The Archaeology of Knowledge, with a semi-structured analysis. The most important works in this approach are "The Birth of the Clinic" (1963), "The Order of Things," or "Words and Things" (1966) and "The Archaeology of Knowledge" (1969).*

*The third part of Foucault's works is his genealogy that examines the relationship between discourse and knowledge on the one hand and power on the other. "The Order of Things" (1970), "Discipline and Punish," the first volume of "History of Sexuality," and "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History" (1971) are among the literature of this attitude.*

*Foucault's work has spread beyond the boundaries of sociology in which one type of sociology or perhaps a few types of sociology can be easily found (Smart, 1966; 1969), including empirical research in madness and madhouse (Foucault, 1965), criminality and the system of guardianship (Foucault, 1979), and sexual desire and social surveillance of sexual activities (Foucault, 1980, 1985). His works are not only related to sociological theories but also are useful for various subfields of sociology. In addition to extensiveness, Foucault's works are sophisticated and embracing a variety of interpretations. Foucault's intentional fervor also complicates his work: Do not ask who I am and do not want me to remain the same person" (1969, p. 17). Indeed, Foucault did not remain the same, and his works show that he has changed his position in his professional life many times. Foucault's works also show a variety of*

*theoretical inputs (Smith, 89: 1985). Such variety in Foucault's works is attractive but makes it difficult to understand them. Moreover, the thoughts in Foucault's works have not been adapted solely from other thinkers, but have merged into Foucault's unconventional theoretical orientation. For example, although Weber's theory of rationality influenced Foucault's mind, he determined this concept only in the "central points" and always sees a resistance to this rationality, instead of considering rationality as an "iron cage" like Weber. Marxist ideas (Smart, 23: 1983) can also be found in Foucault's works, but he does not bind himself to the economy and emphasizes a wide range of institutions. Foucault is interested in "political power at the macro level," more than the traditional Marxist interest in social power. He uses paraphrase knowledge to understand his favorite social phenomena better. Foucault's has nothing to do with the deep and ultimate truth; there are only some layers of truth for him, which should be pushed off continuously. Foucault is also influenced by phenomenology while rejecting the idea of an autonomous and meaningful identifier. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Foucault accepts Nietzsche's interest in the relationship between power and knowledge, but he performs a much more sociological analysis of this relationship.*

### ***3. The Intellectual Context and Social Conditions Affecting Foucault's Thought***

*The political and intellectual atmosphere of France during the post-World War II period, which also influenced Foucault's thought, was as follows:*

*French intellectuals often used "subject-oriented" theories of phenomenology to understand war-related occurrences. Some intellectuals were also attracted to the Communist Party because of their willingness to*

*participate in political affairs. However, this trend was completely reversed due to some political events in the mid-1950s and expanded the disillusionment and political aversion among intellectuals. With such incidents, the intellectuals turned away from literature and the humanities and tended toward scientific disciplines such as epistemology, ethics, psychoanalysis, linguistics, and social sciences. Following the turbulent political atmosphere of 1968, Foucault's political interests changed. He, along with other intellectuals, joined the committees against racism to defend the rights of patients and to reform health issues. Among them, the most important committee was the "Committee of Prisoners' News," with the aim of creating a platform for prisoners to express their concerns during the period of unrest in prisons (Jalayipour, 190: 2008).*

#### **4. Intellectual Frontiers of Foucault's Worldview**

*Foucault is considered a post-structuralist and post-modernist. Jalayipour also believes that, although some scholars call Foucault a "modernist," they consider him to be basically "post-structuralist" (Jalayipour, 189: 2008). Although structuralism heavily influenced Foucault in his early works, this influence gradually faded, and other inputs led his theory toward other various paths (Ritz, 90: 2011).*

*However, Robino and Dreyfus clearly explain that Foucault was never a constructivist or post-structuralist in the strict sense of the word. Later, he even retreated from his strong claims in the archaeology of knowledge, including that the discourse is a regular system, as various types of structuralism considered, or an autonomous and self-referential system, as post-structuralism claimed at that time (Dreyfus, 55: 2010).*



*One of the reasons for Foucault's post-structuralism was the plurality of theoretical inputs of his thought, some of which are as follows.*

*In the introduction to "Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics," Bashirieh points out that: the main frontiers of Foucault's worldview are phenomenology, hermeneutics, structuralism, and Marxism. In Foucault's youth, two major trends were common in France: 1) Phenomenology and existentialism, and 2) Marxism (Dreyfus, 14: 2010). Robinho and Dreyfus also believe that we must focus exactly on the three themes of structuralism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics in order to clarify Foucault's three-way intellectual trends (Dreyfus, 48: 2010). However, they both believe that he had always sought to go beyond the three themes (Dreyfus, 54: 2010).*

#### ***5. Analysis of power relations from Foucault's perspective***

*As noted, Foucault's studies of power become more serious using genealogy method. In other words, we can see that his intellectual interests and concerns have undergone a fundamental change and shifted toward "Analysis of power relations" from the late 1960s, and more precisely, after the suppression of the student movement in May 1968. The book "Discipline and Punish," written in the early 1970s, is the result of Foucault's attention to power at this point. However, Foucault does not accept it and says: "I am not a theorist of power, at least I can say that power is not my favorite as an independent issue." (19 Barry Smart 1994.4 p17)*

*It should be noted at the outset that Foucault's view of power does not arise in the framework of a particular theory, which offers a non-textual, non-historical and objective description. Instead, he seeks to systematically analyze the power relations or, in his words, "power analysis." In his*

*opinion, "if we try to establish a theory of power, then we will always have to consider it as a phenomenon that occurs in a particular place and time" (Dreyfus, ibid, 31). The consequence of this phenomenon is the presentation of general theories and a coherent and unified explanation of power, which is in contradiction to the Foucault's genealogical method (based on the analysis of the deeds in a particular way and paying attention to the cultural context of the deeds done).*

*Initially, Foucault calls for an analysis of power relations by proving a few points: (ibid., 362)*

- 1. A system of distinctions such as traditional privileges, as well as legal, linguistic and cultural distinctions, which allows individuals to influence the actions of others somehow.*
- 2. Types of goals and intentions pursued by power activists, such as maintaining privileges, accruing profit, etc.*
- 3. Tools for the establishment of power relations: Whether the power is enforced by the threat of using the means of power, the construal effects of the word, the use of complicated means of surveillance systems, the use of archives, by virtue of rules that are constant and changeable, the use of technological means, or without the use of these tools.*
- 4. Institutional forms: These forms may incorporate traditional tendencies, legal structures, and phenomena associated with custom and common practices (such as the family institution). They may also appear in the form of a closed framework with precise centers, hierarchical and personal rules and structures, and relative autonomy in performance. Moreover, these forms may include highly complex systems requiring multiple devices (such as the state). The*

*specific tasks of this form include the exercise of authority over everything, the establishment of general order and discipline, the regulation and supervision and, to a degree, the distribution of all power relations within the social system.*

- 5. Degrees of rationality: The implementation of power relations as an action in the field of facilities may be more complex depending on the impact of the tools and the certainty of their results, as well as of the probable cost (whether the economic cost or the resistance being raised).*

*Given these points, Foucault seeks to analyze power relations. In Foucault's analysis, power means an action that causes change or direction to the behavior of others. From this perspective, power is the general structure of actions that affect others' possible actions. Power encourages, facilitates or makes it difficult, restricts or explicitly forbids; however, power is always the way of acting on the subject of action because the subject acts or is able to act (Ibid., 358). In this sense, since the actions of "A" could determine the scope of "B", "A" has exercised power over "B" (Jeremy Moss (ed), 1998. p. 67).*

### ***5.1. The relationship between Power and freedom***

*In Foucault's view, there is a close relationship between power and freedom. The power relations are strategic games between individuals and freedom that can influence others' actions, despite the influence of power. In his opinion, power is exercised solely on free individuals, i.e., those who are in the position of choice, because its aims to influence the choices of human beings and to shape their actions. Hence, the relationship between*

*servant and master cannot be regarded as a power relation, but it is a kind of physical coercion that is more similar to the concept of domination. Distinguishing the two concepts of power and domination, Foucault argues that domination refers to the asymmetric power relations in which the dependent persons have little room for maneuver due to their marginalized freedom (by the effects of power). It is while power refers to the flexible, multifaceted, movable and resilient relations. Foucault links power to freedom and sees the power relations different from violent relations. He believes that violent relations depend on the direct and immediate use of force on the body or objects, which ultimately forces the person to surrender and has devastating and passive feature. The power relation does not mean to deny freedom, but it is based on a kind of "strategy" on which particular power techniques guide others and "embracing a complete range of responses, reactions, results, and possible measures" (Dreyfus: 358).*

*As a result, in spite of Foucault's view, power and freedom are not confronted with each other, but they are interconnected. This notion of power is against the definitions given by modern thinkers (such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Marx, and others), in which power, as a reinforcement of the capabilities of one of the actors, allows them restricting their power to change the behavior of the subjects.*

## **5.2. Power as a communicative matter**

*Foucault considers power as the "relationship between forces" and does not limit it to the relationship between servant and master, or reflected in centralized structures and institutions such as the state and parties. In his view, the legal-philosophical conception of power and the explanation of power in relation to institutions such as the king and the state are rooted in*

*a modern attitude. It is surprising if the modern concept of power is not linked to the kingdom and the state. In his words, "modern political theory has never left the king alone" (Stewart R. Clegg, 2001: 89).*

*Foucault believes that the state is merely an institution in which power is visible in its final form; while power is deeply rooted in the network of society and can be considered in all areas of society and human relationships (even romantic relationships). Hence, one should not seek the origin of power relations in institutions, because it would explain power by power and restricts power relations merely in the form of legal or compulsory forms. The roots of power must be found in the society, not as a phenomenon like damage to the structure of society that must be eliminated. Consequently, speaking of a society without power relations is only possible in abstraction. In Foucault's attitude, power is taken into account not only in its formal and institutional forms but also in the "endpoints" of its actions, that is, at the level of human relations where power has little legal nature. Foucault does not want to consider how to take possession or seize power but considers its implementation and effects in direct and immediate relation to what we can call the "subject" or "object" of power (Smart. Op Cit. p9. 26). In this regard, he states that: "My major research theme is not power, but how to make man as a subject" (Ibid. P91). In this context, he does not consider issues such as gender as the natural task of a human for reproduction or gaining pleasure. In contrast, he considers it as an epitome of speeches and behaviors that puts human beings in power relations. In other words, "gender is a strategy for the management, production, and control of human organs and their social relations" (Zamiran, 63: 2000). So, Foucault's main problem in power is to find answers to these questions. He knows: "Who do apply the power?" Who*

*decides for me? Who does plan for my activities? How are the decisions making up my life made? "(Foucault, 1993, p. 53-52)*

*Foucault's analysis of power is based on the study of power techniques and tactics and how it functions. On the basis of such an analysis, power must be presented as something that is rooted in time, or perhaps as something that only acts in a chained manner, never focuses anywhere, is not in the hands of anyone, and cannot be regarded as a commodity or property. "Power is everywhere, not because it involves everything, but because it comes from everywhere and goes from the bottom up" (Tavistock, 1980, pp. 85-6). From this perspective, power often acts, instead of being in the hands of someone or a privilege for the ruling class. Power includes a set of strategic situations. Power is like the complex strategies that run through the social system, it never appears exhaustively and universally, appearing only in the places of action at "micro-level." Here, power is not absolute, but merely a set of interconnected networks and sets. As a result, we can no longer consider a single entity for power, but we face various forms of power in local and varied forms. In words, we are facing the "microphysics of power." In this sense, power varies in different situations and spaces; each has its own special history and techniques.*

*In fact, power in this sense has no substantive content. Rather than something that is to be seized and centralized, it is a kind of technology that has disciplinary roles in relation to knowledge and operates based on discipline and punishment techniques within the framework of institutions such as prison, hospital, factory, university, and barracks. However, it should be noted that the forms of power have also been transformed. "In the transformation during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, power was changed from sovereignty, state and repression to the biopower (with the*

aim of providing individual and collective prosperity and well-being). In the 19th century, power appeared in the form of the political anatomy of the body (with emphasis on the application of disciplinary technology" (Dreyfus, p. 30, p. 30). In the recent period, one of the main techniques of modern power has emerged for continuous monitoring and control over the subordinates, which is interpreted as "Observability Inversion Technique." In this sense, the king was most observable in the royal regimes, while those who must be disciplined become the most observable people under the biopower institutions" (Ibid., P. 320).

In Foucault's mind, normalization, discipline, and punishment in the past were performed as torture and public shows (execution in public). However, kind of shift in power has occurred in the present era, whereby power is exercised over the soul and mind of people. Foucault explains this transformation in the exercise of power with respect to the transition from "demo society" to "disciplinary society." He wrote that: "Our society is not based on the show, but also on discipline; under the surface of the images, the bodies are deeply encircled" (Foucault, 1999: 270).

Generally, with the establishment of a continuous discipline and punishment, as well as disciplinary techniques based on the constraint and the infinitely generalizable mechanisms of "superficiality," one can speak of the formation of a disciplinary society in which power influences in the most delicate and furthest angles of human life. In the aftermath of such a form of power, it was felt that the body should be known more precisely and subjugated more effectively by understanding its functioning. These foundations of domination, which are based on knowledge and a type of correction, are called "political technology of the body." Undersuch

*domination, the body is directly in the political arena, where the power relations seize and encircle it, they kick it up and tame it, they torture it and enforce it to do things and perform something (Ibid., P. 37). As a result, man, as the subject of knowledge, is considered the subject/product of this domination/observation (Sheridan Op cit. Pp. 85-6). In any case, it can be argued that in the network conception of power proposed by Foucault, people are not only within the power networks but always in a dual state of "exercise of power and being under its domination." Here, it is thought that no power is entirely in the hands of one person who can dominate others alone. Power is not an institution or structure, but a machine in which everyone is entangled, either those who exercise power or those who are under power. This approach to power has particular implications for the analysis. "If power is not a thing or the control of a set of institutions, or even the rationality lied in history, then the analyst will be responsible for determining and recognizing its function." (Dreyfus, p. 312)*

### **5.3. Power-Knowledge**

*Foucault considers the mechanisms of power require effective tools for the production and accumulation of knowledge, and writes: "In most writings, power has been characterized by negative attributes: power depriving, suppressing, censoring, inhibiting, concealing and covering." (Smart, Op. Cit., P. 7). It is while power is a producer when power is exercised through mechanisms such as observation, registration practices, and research processes, it means that power has no way but to create, organize and launch devices for knowledge. The exercise of power necessarily drives knowledge and creates spaces in which the knowledge is formed.*

*This attitude toward the relationship between power and knowledge stands against the common view in modern thinking that knowledge formation is*



*conditional to the retreat of power because power was considered as a negative and oppressive factor. However, Foucault asks whether we constantly obey the power if it was merely oppressive. He replies that power has maintained its position because it did not act as an oppressive force or a heavy burden against which people resist. Power has been a means by which everything has taken place, i.e., knowledge production, forms of dialogue and pleasure. As a result, Foucault does not consider the relationship between power and knowledge from the outside perspective or does not see one of them as the outcome and effect of another. He believes that power and knowledge directly imply each other and "there is no power relation without the formation of knowledge and there is no knowledge that implies power relations" (Dreyfus, p. 24). To Foucault, social sciences and the humanities, as part of the process of exercising power and domination over human, explain the formation of different discourses in the context of power relations.*

*In this approach, power technology is a collection of scientific discourses; because the need to identify, classify, determine the types of punishments, and recognize the characters of criminals has created a new field of knowledge called the "Political Anatomy of the Body" that serves in the disciplinary technologies of power. Accordingly, it is possible to analyze essentially political issues in a technical- scientific and impartial language using power technologies for knowledge in order to distinguish between the norms of abnormalities and to form a kind of "discursive bordering", "distribution" and "discipline". Thus, it can be concluded that "when power is exercised through subtle mechanisms, there is no way but to create, organize and launch devices for knowledge" (Luxe, 1991: 339).*

#### **5.4. Power and Resistance**

*The consideration of the resistance to power helps us to understand the power relations better. Foucault believes that "no power or authority can be found that does not create resistance". Thus, one can see a full scope of "responses, reactions, and possible measures" in the face of any power relation. So, the way of exercising power may be recognized by the nature of its resistance. Resistance is always considered as "irreducible confrontation" in power relations (Jeff Monison, 1980, vol. 9.p.8). Indeed, power flows only in the course of struggles, reactions, and resistances made by human have to overcome power relations. Hence, it is inevitably necessary to consider the forms of resistance to power.*

*Foucault aimed to study and analyze the power more precisely and provide a more empirical analysis of power, in which the forms of resistance to various types of power are considered as a point of departure. Instead of analyzing power from its internal rationality and surveillance of the intellect over power (as it was proposed from Kant), he evaluates power relation on the basis of the struggle against it. Hence, he chooses the following forms of resistance to power as a point of departure: women against men, children against parents, psychological patients against psychoanalysts, and so on. Foucault regards these struggles as "all over the world", not limited to a specific country, with an aggressive and anarchical nature, opposed to the effects of power.*

*Foucault believes that the forms of struggle have changed over time so that it does not seek to question the power institution (in the form of the kingdom) as before, but also aims to question the power-knowledge relation, and in other words, the forms and techniques of power. He identifies three forms of this struggle, including the struggle against the forms of domination (ethnic, religious, and social), against exploitation,*

*and against the thing that confines the person to himself and thereby surrenders him to others. By this classification, he aims to get rid of the domination and achieve a definition of the subject. The result is that power exercise is usually threatened by the disobedience of the subordinates, and the techniques of exercising power experience some kind of continuous refinement and reform due to confronting with resistance, disagreement and leading costs.*

## **6. Genealogy of modern power**

*Foucault's empirical studies of modernity focus on the emergence and distinction of modern forms of power from other traditional forms. In his view, the survival and continuity of modernity (at least in some of its aspects) are due to the function of its new regime of power-knowledge. This regime includes processes, functions, subjects of research, institutional situations, and above all, political dispositions that considerably differ from the previous regimes (Smart, 2001. p.137).*

*Foucault believes that we must understand the exercise of power, not in terms of "right", but in terms of technique; not in terms of the law, but in terms of normalization; and not in terms of abuse, but in terms of punishment and control. According to Foucault, the modern political thought is inadequate to think about the new forms of power because it raises political-philosophical questions like legal questions, such as what is the scope of power? How to restrict the use and misuse of it? Foucault argues that modern political thought speaks of the rights of the "ruler" and the duties of the "citizens". Thereby, it conceals the fact that speeches about truth and legitimacy are not merely ways to preserve individuals*

*from the existence of power, but disciplinary actions that make human subjects in the new power relations. He says that: "Do not pay attention to the constant presence of the truth or the power itself but imagine them as a strategy by which you can see its dominant influence is not attributed to the retrieval of truth, but to the tendencies, moves, tactics, tools, and functions of power. In that strategy, we must discover a network of (power) relations that are constantly tense and active."*

*According to Foucault, the modern power, unlike its former forms, is local, productive, continuous, networked, and comprehensive, which is influenced by the space in which modern power has emerged. Foucault argues that, contrary to our belief, the modern power-knowledge regime is not imposed on individuals, but it is gradually developed from the late eighteenth century in the form of disciplinary institutions at local and micro level. In his opinion, various forms of power sub-techniques exercised through medical care, discipline and control in the form of institutions such as hospital, prison and school differentiate the modern form of power from its old forms, which were the function of the large centers of power (Colin Gordon: 1980. pp. 158-59).*

*From Foucault's point of view, the ultimate goal of power is to regulate and control individuals' behavior. In this sense, the government implies regulating behavior through more or less rational use of the appropriate technological means. Thus, disciplinary institutions of modern power faced issues such as organizing, managing, controlling and monitoring a large number of people. In the face of these issues, techniques and tactics were introduced in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Europe included the element of computing and recognizing the target. One of these tactics was continuous discipline or surveillance that was reflected as a knowledge-power technique by the*

community administrators. This tactic worked for continuous control and monitoring of the followers. These disciplinary techniques of power, which were exercised through surveillance and observation, linked power and knowledge deeply and moderated the violence and the military nature of power, and prepared individuals by internalizing continuous monitoring and control to embrace it. This kind of surveillance was applied hierarchically by the individualization processes or holistic control through the style of organizational architecture and innovations. Thus, it put certain categories such as female/male and healthy/patient to realize what Foucault referred to as "docile bodies". This disciplinary form of power was applied to one or more people with the following objectives: "Their skill forms the ability to control themselves, enhances their ability to act harmoniously, makes them flexible against commands, or mold their properties in other ways (Colin Gordon 1980. pp. 158-59).

In order to provide a detailed description of this form of power, Foucault takes into account the concept of "biopower" and thus proposes issues of power-knowledge in relation to the subject, population, health, urban life, and sexuality. According to him, the expansion of discipline in this period is in line with the invention of the subject, that is, the conception of a human being with spirit and mind, consciousness, repentance, and other internal aspects that can be formed by other actors. As a result, each of us will be portrayed as those who have learned to consider surveillance, strictness, and categorization as a normal matter, and formulate our behavior and personality according to the will of power and disciplinary projects (Hinds, 2001, p. 130). The important thing for Foucault is to show that the subject is the creature of power. That is, the subject is created by the microphysical mechanisms of power and the process of normalization.

*In this form of power exercise, the disciplinary patterns in its criminal and criminal forms have continued to imprison the body and subjugate the soul. In this context, power is exercised secretly and vulgarly on the individual and the social body from within and consolidate the aspects of power on the body and its subjugations. Foucault considers the new criminal system to contain numerous centers of power in the framework of the "microphysics of power", in which the subject, social-scientific discourses, and political arrangements intersect and strengthen each other. Accordingly, the person is a reality created by the special power technologies in the form of disciplinary techniques. However, Foucault takes into account sexuality-power relations, not from the perspective of suppression, but from the angle of reinforcement and recreation. Therefore, sexuality and power coexist and form the subjectivity and human subject in the "immortal labyrinths of power and pleasure."*

*Generally speaking, the biopower embraces a number of such assumptions: "The old form of power that symbolized sovereignty power is now replaced by a form of power that acts in the direction of body subjugation, calculation, and evaluation. In the past, various forms of discipline were developed within the framework of universities, schools, hospitals, and so on. Then, issues such as birth rate, life expectancy, public health and welfare, and housing have been considered in the political and economic arenas."*

### **7. Critique of Foucault's Ideas and Thoughts:**

*"Foucault does not see any progress throughout history, from primitive savagery to the newer humanity based on more sophisticated*

*epistemologies," says Ritzer. He considers history to be the continuous turn of a (knowledge-based) dominant system into another system. Although his image is completely blurred, Foucault, in his positive thinking, believes that knowledge-based power always confronts with resistance. Although Foucault does not regard knowledge separate from power, he does not recognize any conspiracy from the elites. Such a conspiracy implies the existence of conscious actors, while Foucault is more likely to recognize structural relations, especially between knowledge and power (Ritzer, 2008: 557).*

*- Smart is among those who have criticized Foucault. He believes that the most common political critique of Foucault is that his works deny "any basis for progressive political intervention." Foucault's works have a sterilizing and self-defeating effect and leave no room for maneuver. In short, what is missing in his works is a recommendation or direction for action, that is, the lack of an answer to the question "What should I do?". (Smart, 2001: 237)*

*- It seems that Foucault is interested in the modern West, though he has criticized humanism and Western beliefs in his works.*

## **8. Conclusion**

*Foucault is a philosopher like everybody and nobody. Although he has repeatedly spoken about the influence of his past philosophers both in his speeches and in interviews, and also considered Heidegger, Nietzsche, Freud, etc. as the most influential thinkers in his intellectual system, his philosophy is very different and perhaps the other side of the whole process of knowledge and anthropology posted in the modern West. Although the*

*concepts of archaeology and genealogy were discussed before Foucault and had a particular place (for example, in the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche), Foucault created a novel and new concept by this approach because human beings were prioritized more than anything else.*

*Foucault's discussion of power is about modernized societies where democratic trends are fundamentally fulfilled, and the central power in the form of government has been diminished. In this state, contrary to the traditional notion, power is not "a speech presented from a seat", but also a set of propositions independently in all institutions. The more influential would be the power, the less it resorts to a higher will, and the more it depends on observation (Barnes, 2002: 286 and 111). On this basis, Foucault's methodological stance on power is against the position he refers to as the "legal discourse". Legal discourse had been prevalent since the Middle Ages, on which power was analyzed as a matter of law in relation to the language and the interpretation of the law and legal institutions and the views of the government. In this perspective, two essential elements were considered to examine power: 1. The power of the dominant forces. 2. The legitimacy or legitimization of quantity (Thorne, 281: 2001). In this discourse, it was thought that power is applied from a central point (sovereignty), has a negative form (repressive, deterrent, and prohibitive), and based on a form of contract in which there is a serious distinction between the ruler and the subordinate.*

*By using the concept of "governmentality", Foucault aims to indicate that the modern form of power in the context of the government exists concretely, and the exercise of power is associated with the political, diplomatic, military techniques and the 18<sup>th</sup>-century concept of policy (Jeff Mison. 1980 p. 5).*



*The Foucault's novelty was to raise a set of new rules for the formulation of power in its present form, which can be enumerated as follows (Barnes, ex. 112):*

*First, he sought to see disciplinary techniques of power as a systematic and productive factor, not as a repressive and prejudicial ruling.*

*Second, he sought to see punitive and criminal methods as a set of special techniques and actions with particular repressive power, not as a reflection or result of other forces, such as social structures or legislative institutions.*

*Third, by proposing the knowledge-power, linking power and freedom, and rejecting the government as the unique identity-giver structure, he sought to humanize the function of power technology more and provide a kind of liberation and construction (against oppression and deterrence of power) within the framework of the modern state.*

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