Marxism And Its 'Other': Why Do We Need Althusser To Understand Foucault?

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Abstract

With the current renewal of interest in the Marxist theoretical tradition, revisiting its classical and neoclassical texts is crucial for understanding Marxism's explanatory potential in the context of contemporary socio-political relationships. This paper makes productive efforts to review existing theoretical perspectives on non-coercive mechanisms of engaging the masses with particular value systems. I discuss Althusser's theory of ideology: its content, central critique, and developments in relation to other compatible theories, the most salient of which is the idea of governmentality proposed by Foucault. Foucault's approach is especially interesting due to its consistent attempts to separate itself from the critical tradition. As I demonstrate, however, several parallels can be drawn between the theory of ideology and the notion of governmentality, including the focus on reproduction, attempts to address the issue of contingency, interest in both the symbolic and the material, the emphasis on the mechanism of subjection and recognition of individualization of power relationships. I conclude that critical reflections over Althusser's epistemological findings and the legacy of his ideas may facilitate our understanding of prospective developments in the Marxist tradition and its alternatives.

Keywords: materialism, power, critical tradition, interpellation, social dynamics.

Introduction

Since the devastating experiences of the 2008 economic crisis, Marxism is increasingly re-emerging in the academic and social agenda worldwide (Williams, 2015). This development calls for new attempts to revisit and rethink Marxist theoretical tradition in a historical perspective, including projects proposed by neo-Marxists. Despite a diversity of theoretical contributions, neo-Marxists demonstrated a commitment to the analysis of class struggle as a fundamental aspect of market-driven social systems. Writings by Louis Althusser will be of central interest to this paper. Althusser's insights into the theory of ideology are revisited and discussed in

relation to the currently prominent concept of governmentality proposed by Michel Foucault. Biographies of the two scholars are interrelated. Althusser tutored Foucault in the 1950s (Ryder, 2013) and remained interested in his work for years. He encouraged the student (Rehmann, 2013) and publicly credited some of Foucault's writings (Elliot, 2009; Montag, 2005). Althusser definitely had a certain influence on Foucault: following his inspirations, Foucault had briefly come in contact with the French Communist Party (Oksala, 2012). However, their intellectual trajectories developed in quite distinctive directions. Foucault eventually turned to Heidegger and Nietzsche to engage in a project distinctive to neo-Marxism, promoting his theoretical approach as an alternative to historical materialism in both traditional and structuralist formats (Elliot, 2009; Rehmann, 2013).

The established academic discussion on the legacy of Althusser and Foucault's theoretical inventions typically focus on the distinction between ideology and discourse (Barrett, 1991; Purvis and Hunts, 1993; Sholle, 1988), though Foucault himself eventually abandoned radical post-structuralism to develop the idea of power (Barrett, 1991, Rehmann, 2013). This essay looks beyond the ideology–discourse dichotomy to account for Foucault's later elaborations on governmentality as a specific form of power. I outline conceptual parallels in the pairs ideology/governmentality and interpellation/confession, striving to demonstrate the value of recasting Althusserian tradition and related critical developments (occasionally articulated in tandem with some of Foucault's insights) that can enable plausible conceptualization of the current social-political order.

The notion of ideology was initially addressed by Althusser in his series of essays For Marx, published in 1965, and was finally elaborated in *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, which appeared in 1970 in *La Pensee*. Foucault invented the idea of power at the turn of the 1970s (Rehmann, 2013). The concept matured through *The History of Sexuality-1* (1976) and courses taught at the College de France (*Society Must Be Defended*, 1975–1976; Security, Territory, Population, 1977–1978), gradually disappearing in Foucault's American lectures of the 1980s and The History of Sexuality-2,3 (see also Resch, 1992). The reception of the two bodies of theoretical work was remarkable. At the start, Althusser obtained a wide group of followers in Europe while remaining almost unknown in the United States (Barrett, 1991), but the group gradually diminished and disintegrated at the end of the 1970s (Elliot, 2009). Foucault enjoyed a rising recognition on both continents, and his ideas are still popular, facilitating the emergence of a new domain of 'governmentality studies' (Walters, 2012). While Foucault's work on discipline as a specific power form is already well-established and explored, 'governmentality' is still a new 'fashion,' on the stage of discovery and trial. I hope that placing the theory of

ideology side by side with the idea of governmentality can facilitate a reflection on the legacy of Marxism, its developments, and its alternatives.

The paper consists of three parts. First, I will present Althusser's account of ideology. The conception is claimed to be frequently misunderstood by readers, due to its sophisticated approach to the issue of 'force and consent' (Montag, 2005), and therefore needs a more detailed description. Next will follow a discussion on Foucault's governmentality concerning the notion of ideology. Finally, I will summarize parallels and divergences between the two accounts in order to sketch out the value of re-reading Althusser's texts.

Althusser's theory of ideology

It is widely acknowledged that the initial definition of ideology proposed in the 1960s emphasizes a 'system of representations' ('images' or 'concepts,' 'perceived-accepted-suffered cultural objects') essential to all societies. Those representations work by organizing men's consciousness 'via a process that escapes them' and condition individuals' (self-)perception (Althusser, 2005b, pp. 199-200). Ideology, therefore, is associated with '*lived* relation between men and their world,' the 'second-degree' relation ('relation between relations') which encompasses certain 'imaginary' elements: 'In ideology, the real relationship is inevitably invested in the imaginary relation, a relation that *expresses* a will (conservative, confirmative, reformist or revolutionary), a hope or a nostalgia, rather than describing a reality' (ibid., p. 200, original emphasis). Ideology's intent is not necessarily, or not always, merely manipulative. Its function is for all social groups – constituting, legitimizing, and facilitating collective identities as well as the very order of domination (ibid.; see also 3). If ideology is hiding anything, it is not the real conditions of existence, but somewhat contradictions that underlie those conditions (Boswell et al., 1986). In this way, ideology for Althusser is detached from the iconic notion of 'false consciousness,' a falsehood imposed by rulers on the subjugated.

In *For Marx*, ideology is explored in its relationships with knowledge and science (Althusser 2005bcd; see also Resch, 1992). Analysing Marx's texts, Althusser attempts to establish a boundary between 'theoretical ideology' (philosophy) and science. He claims to recognize a departure from the bourgeois ideology that separated *Capital* from Marx's early texts written in the tradition of humanism (Althusser, 2005; see also Smart, 1983). While the historical materialism introduced in Capital is viewed as a scientific theory, the humanism of young Marx is defined by Althusser as an ideology based on its uncritical attitude toward its internal unity ('problematic').

Theoretical ideologies are further separated from 'non-theoretical' ones, such as ethics and political ideologies (Althusser, 2005¹, pp. xiii-xiv). Theoretical practice – 'the labour of transformation'– is placed among other modes of practice (social, ideological, political) and defined by the moment of 'epistemological break' (Althusser, 2005c, pp. 131-132). Theory in general rises out of theoretical exercises in turning 'into knowledge (scientific truths) the ideological product of existing "empirical" practices (the concrete activity of men)' (ibid., p. 132). This transformation, however, cannot guarantee the dissolution of ideology; knowledge about it will lead rather to understanding its inevitability (Althusser, 2005b). Production of a scientific theory, Althusser adds later, demands from the scholar an embracing of 'a proletarian class position,' a move grounded in one's engagement in the social-political struggle. In this way, 'science is extricated from ideology by means of successes earned by the revolutionary moment' (Ryder, 2013, p. 146).

In *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (IISA), ideology is considered in the context of reproduction (Althusser, 2001). Althusser attends to both macro-mechanisms of maintaining class society and to the principles of its micro-level operation. Reproduction of a market-based social system requires the reproduction of 1) 'productive forces' ('means of production' + 'labour power') and 2) 'relations of production'. At the macro-level of analysis, understanding the reproduction of the conditions of production demands engagement with fundamental principles of social organization. Althusser elaborates in this respect on the dissimilarity between Hegelian and Marxian views (Cullenberg, 1996). As readers can learn from the essay *Contradiction and Overdetermination* (in For Marx), whereas Hegelian 'social totality' assumes an overreaching effect of the society's essence on its parts, Marxian 'social whole' is characterized by the recognition of the role of elements collectively making up a large social entity (Althusser, 2005a; Cullenberg, 1996). Those elements, moreover, stand in hierarchical relationships: institutionalized economy (basis or infrastructure = 'productive forces' + 'relations of production') shoulders aspects of social-political life (superstructure = 'Law & State' + ideology) and therefore determines their features. In this way, the 'index of effectivity' of the superstructure is shaped by the basis, 'but only "in the last instance"' (Althusser, 2005a, p. 74).

The expression 'in the last instance' evokes a reference to the idea of 'overdetermination' (Ryder, 2013). The notion was initially developed within psychoanalysis to explain 'how several simultaneous factors, each with some explanatory power, can contribute to the formation of symptoms' (Smith, 1984, p. 159). For Althusser (2005a, p. 75), the effects of the economy on the social-political organization and life of a concrete society should be considered only in the long historical perspective and in tandem with the effects of superstructural and

contextual factors. 'The last instance,' therefore, effectively turns into an occasion that 'never comes' (ibid., p. 76; see also Barrett, 1991). The notion of overdetermination was later transformed into the ideas of 'structural causality' and *Darstellung* (articulation) to explain the cause-effect interplay of social regularities within the matrices of permanency and flexibility (Althusser and Balibar 1970, p. 188; see also Smith, 1984).

The actions of the superstructure on infrastructure are clearly recognizable for Althusser (Althusser, 2001) in the task and context of reproduction of the conditions of production, and more specifically in the reproduction of labour power. Apart from an adequate wage, reproduction of labour power demands acquiring by the prospective labouring individuals certain working competences as well as acceptance of (followed by adherence to) specific norms and morals. The State develops a particular apparatus – ¬Repressive State Apparatus (RSA – e.g., police, military force, court) – operating by force to maintain the interests of the ruling social group. RSA, moreover, secures the political situation for the function of an ideological apparatus (ISA) that works by persuasion and training in the sphere of religion, education, private and family life, politics, civic mobilization, media, and culture. Collectively, those two apparatuses (RSA + ISA) ensure the reproduction of the conditions and relationships of production. In a market-based society, diverse RSA and ISA operate relatively jointly within the public and private domains, being assembled (not without contradictions) by the ideology of the rule: 'It is the intermediation of the ruling ideology that ensures a (sometimes teeth-gritting) "harmony" between the repressive State apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses and between the different State Ideological Apparatuses' (ibid., p. 101).

ISA is a historical phenomenon. Althusser identifies 'the Church-Family couple' to be the major ISA in pre-capitalist times, while in bourgeois societies, the leading role obtains 'the School-Family' tandem. Althusser (2001) describes in detail the function of the ISA 'School' in preparing members of different social strata. School is seen to be especially useful due to its overreaching and obligatory format.

ISA operates through ideology, and the next part of IISA looks closer to this concept. Althusser separates general ideology from particular ones (reflecting specific social positioning) in order to constitute a locus of the discussion. This general ideology is stable over time, ever-present in the very mode of social organization, and therefore 'has no history' (ibid., p. 108). While concrete ideologies serve the function of reproduction via the operation of ISA, general ideology ensures the order by the mechanism of subjects' recruitment (Lock, 1996). Two major propositions are formulated to explain the operation of ideology in class societies: 1) 'ideology

represents the imagery relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence,' and 2) 'ideology has a material existence' (Althusser, 2001, pp. 109-112).

The idea of imagery was already introduced in For Marx, as discussed earlier. The second thesis on ideology, found in IISA, establishes the materiality of ideology and, eventually, of individual consciousness formed and manifesting itself in practices of sovereign subjects. On the one hand, ideology is said to be a feature of ISAs, which are material: they shape an individual's practices using rituals. On the other hand, one's acceptance of specific ideas goes hand in hand with embodied acts (physical and verbal) of obedience, which are elements of ritualized practices grounded in the materiality of the ideological apparatus. Eventually, in contrast to the initial view, ideology is denied any idealistic content (Althusser, 2001; Rehmann, 2013).

After the introduction of ISA and ideology, Althusser moves further to the notion of the subject as being a condition and, simultaneously, an effect of the ideological operation. Subjection is grounded in ideological 'interpellation' and 'recognition.' A mechanism of 'recruiting' 'concrete individuals' as subjects of ideology is famously illustrated by a street-life scene of a policeman calling on someone, 'Hey, you there!' (Althusser, 2001, p. 118). Responding to the call of ideology, the individual becomes its subject as 'he has recognized that the hail was "really" addressed to him, and that "it was really him who was hailed" (and not someone else)' (ibid., p. 118). The 'obviousness' of the hailing functions as a constituting ideological element (Montag, 1995).

Recognition unavoidably entails 'misrecognition' because, as psychological insights have suggested, the granted unity of individual identity necessarily entails alienation (Rehmann, 2013). Moreover, recognizing the certainty of hailing, the individual appears to be sightless to the societal mechanisms lying behind the ritual of consent, namely, reproduction of the conditions of production (Resch, 1992; Lock, 1996). Ideology works on individuals and therefore appears as a secondary factor, though a pre-ideological individual is instead a nonfigurative notion in Althusser's thought: 'individual is always already a subject' (Althusser, 2001, p. 119; see also Rehmann, 2013). For example, even before a child is born, he or she is already labelled and placed within a gendered dichotomy (see also Rehmann, 2013).

In ideology, subjects amass around a Master Subject (God or another type of authority) in mutual relations, in which domination of the Subject and self-recognition of subjects in the Subject constitute a universal ideological structure securing the smooth operation of ideology. Althusser (2001, p. 123) explains:

> 'caught in this quadruple system of interpellation as subjects, of subjection to the Subject, of universal recognition and of absolute

guarantee, the subjects 'work', they 'work by themselves' in the vast majority of cases, with the exception of the 'bad subjects' who on occasion provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the (repressive) State apparatus. But the vast majority of (good) subjects work all right 'all by themselves', i.e. by ideology (whose concrete forms are realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses).'

In this way, the notion of subject obtains a dual meaning: 1) as a sovereign actor and a social agent, and 2) as an obedient creature: '*(t)he individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e., in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection*' (ibid., p. 123) Interpellation turns individuals into subjects, securing their deliberate compliance. The process of mutual recognition allows not only the formation of individual subjects but also that of an imaginary community (on the basis of common relationships to the Subject), the boundaries of which are (re)produced by acts of inclusion/exclusion (Rehmann, 2013).

I have outlined the fundamental theoretical constructs of Althusser's theory of ideology. His innovative reading of the Marxist theory of ideology shifted attention from production to reproduction (and, correspondently, from analysis of basis to scrutinizing of superstructure), elaborated on the role of imagery in the mechanism of ideology, denied centrality and essentialism of subjectivity and attempted explaining the production of 'individual-subjects' (see also Barrett, 1991). In IISA, Althusser moved from the understanding of ideology as serving the task of maintaining 'social cohesion' towards the formation of subjects through interpellation and training within the system of ideological institutions aimed at the reproduction of the existing order (Resch, 1992). Callinicos (in ibid., p. 215) comprehensively summarised Althusser's overall idea of ideology as the following: 'Ideology is how men and women are formed in order to participate in a process of which they are not the makers, and ideology performs this function by giving them the illusion that history was made for them.'

Ideology and Foucault's idea of power

Foucault's famous intervention into the field of social-political studies is associated with his notion of power. As defined in a series of lectures from 1978, power is a 'relationship of force' enjoying no direct association with the sphere of the economy (Foucault, 2003, p. 14). Power is considered at both macro- and micro-levels. It works on and via individuals instead of being applied to social actors, as preceding

theoretical traditions would assume. Subjects are only formed in interactions with power and appear simultaneously as its source and upshot:

> 'The individual is, is not a vis-à-vis of power; it is, I believe, one of its effects. The individual is an effect of power, one of its primary effects. The individual is an effect of power and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle (Foucault, 1980, p. 98, emphasis added).'

Power is further said to be embedded in all aspects of social life, including social material environment, discourse, policies, institutions, and more. As a researcher, Foucault is not interested in locating power, but in exploring a dynamic of its operational forms/technologies. He specifies three historical modes of power ¬– sovereignty, discipline, and biopower ¬– analyzing variations in the dominant regimes (Foucault 1978). The idea of governmentality gradually formed out of Foucault's discussion on biopower, an order defined by the goal of maintaining 'homeostasis' of the social system utilizing population management (Foucault, 2003). Drawing on an in-depth analysis of governmentality provided elsewhere (Rodin, 2017), I would like to suggest that contemporary interpretations of the concept specify at least three distinctive meanings that have emerged out of Foucault's texts: governmentality as 'governing at a distance' (Rose and Miller, 1992, p. 187), governmentality as biopower (Solomon, 2011), and governmentality as a form of 'political leadership' (Rehmann, 2013). In the following sections, I will review those three meanings of governmentality and relate them to Althusser's notion of ideology.

'Government at a distance'

While Foucault himself never used the expression 'government at a distance', it was invented by his followers, associated with the field of governmentality studies. The notion signifies an approach to managing individuals in a way that they would deliberately and self-efficiently fashion their own lives in line with specific expectations. 'By such mechanisms, authorities can act upon, and enrol those distant from them in space and time in the pursuit of social, political or economic objectives without encroaching on their "freedom" or "autonomy" – indeed often precisely by offering to maximise it by turning blind habit into calculated freedom to choose' (Rose and Miller, 1992, p. 187, emphasis added). The concept originates from Foucault's definition of governmentality as a conduct of the self and others

(Foucault, 1997b). Governmentality is then thought to serve as a 'linkage' between technologies of power and technologies of the self (Lemke, 2013). The attentive reader cannot miss the apparent parallel between Althusser's idea of ideology and 'government at a distance': 'the subjects "work," they "work by themselves"' (Althusser, 2001, p. 123), individuals are recruited as 'free' subjects subjecting themselves to a particular order.

ISAs are carriers and manifestations of the ideology of the ruling class; they express and serve bourgeois interests. Similarly, Foucault's governmentality is built on the idea of intentionality, although the related strategies apparently lack any subject of power and therefore appear as a controversial proposition (see the related discussion in Rodin, 2017). In distinction to the theory of ideology, Foucault's approach is more sensitive to 'horizontal' self-socialization due to the analytical differentiation between self-ethics and power command. It, therefore, more closely resembles the approach taken by *Projekt Ideologietheorie* (PIT), a group of Althusser's followers (Rehmann, 2013).

Technologies of the self gradually become of special interest for Foucault. They were initially put in the context of societal mechanisms and defined as allowing individuals to manage their bodies, psyche, and conduct in line with certain ideals of individual wellbeing (Foucault 1997c). 'Confession' is one of the central technologies of the self, described by Foucault (1997c). An element of Christian religious tradition, confession emerged as a ritualized performance evaluated by the religious authority regarding the confessant's prospects for purification. Truth ¬– a product of confession ¬– obtains its form in one's self-reflection facilitated by the confessor's moral guidelines. In this process, individuals are constituted as subjects (Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2013). The effect of subjection is strengthened by self-alienation, resulting from continuous self-monitoring (Foucault 1997c). Formed in the context of religious institutions, confession as a mechanism of subjection spread itself to other social domains (ibid.; see also Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2013). Once again, the production of subjects based on rituals, freedom to comply, and historical transfer of ideological training from church to other institutions of civil society are already familiar to the reader from Althusser's notions of interpellation and ISA.

Governmentality as government at a distance is moreover operationalized into two elements: 'technologies of government' and 'governmental rationalities' (Dean, 2010). 'Technologies' signify 'organized ways of doing things' (ibid., p. 27). Unlike the traditional interpretation of materialism in terms of practice or 'custom' characteristic to Althusser's ISA (Balibar, 2014, pp. xiii-xiv), technologies are exclusively power effects and, therefore, abstract (Resch, 1992). 'Rationalities' refer to 'any form of thinking which strives to be relatively clear, systematic and explicit

about aspects of "external" and "internal" existence, about how things are and how they ought to be' (Dean, 2010, pp. 18-19). The notion of rationalities traces its origin back to Foucault's well-established discussion on discourse and truth that opposed the critical theory of ideology (Rehmann, 2013, Resch, 1992). 'Discourse' was invented in *The Order of Things* (1966) and elaborated further in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) as a response to Althusser's *For Marx and Reading Capital*, where ideology was interpreted in more idealistic terms (Rehmann, 2013). It was closely linked to the problem of truth, the central feature of the modern public domain (Foucault, 1988). 'Truth' is thought rather broadly in Foucault's texts to be 'a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and functioning of statements' (Foucault in Lorenzini, 2015, p. 2). The concern was primarily with 'the politics of truth' (Foucault, 1988, p. 118). Such an approach demarcated a break with the critical theory of ideology, as presented in one of Foucault's most widely cited interviews:

> 'If I wanted to pose and drape myself in a slightly fictional style, I would say that this had always been my problem: the effects of power and the production of 'truth'. I have always felt uncomfortable with this ideological notion which has been used in recent years. It has been used to explain errors or illusions, or to analyse presentations – in short, everything that impedes the formation of true discourse. It has been used to show the relation between what goes on in people's heads and their place in the conditions of production. In sum, the economics of untruth. My problem is the politics of truth. I have spent a lot of time dealing with it' (Foucault, 1988, p. 118).

This interpretation can hardly address Althusser's theory of ideology as being dissociated from the dichotomies of falsity versus truth, and authenticity versus representation (Resch, 1992). For Althusser, ideology is merely confronted with science based on its pragmatic intent; it 'knows' the reality primarily with the sole aim of facilitating some 'practical goals' (ibid., p. 213). It does not deal with conscious ideas and beliefs, but rather with unconscious factors fashioning individuals' conduct (Montag, 2003). Science and knowledge then emerge 'out of the real struggle within ideology, or, to be more precise, in the conflict between ideologies that is the irreducible condition of social life' (Sprinker, 1995, p. 217). With this interpretation, the distinction of ideology and discourse turns out to be less apparent.

Rehmann (2013) even finds a direct influence of Althusser's thought on Foucault's theorizing. It is argued that at the close of the 1960s, Foucault 'first dissolved the

problem of ideology into the concept of "knowledge" and "discourse" and then transformed it… to the concept of power' (ibid., p. 190). This move from archaeology to genealogy inaugurated the transition towards relativism and Nietzschean 'fictionalism': from the flexibilization of knowledge ('it's all discourse') to establishing the overreaching command of power ('it's all power'). The 'will to truth' and the 'will to power' were eventually collapsed together (Rehmann, 2013, p. 201), problematizing the epistemological status of Foucault's project itself (Barrett, 1991; Resch, 1992).

Foucault is claimed to latently adhere to the idea of 'ideology in general,' even striving to separate himself from the Althusserian tradition (Rehmann, 2013). Not surprisingly, governmentality studies eventually arrived at the ideology-like explanation of the mentalities of government as being close to a 'collective consciousness' comprising 'taken for granted' elements (Dean, 2010, p. 25). Even more traditional connotations can be found in Foucault's legacy. Let us consider his view of state rationalities associated with the 'wealth-population problem' such as 'taxation' and 'depopulation.' It echoes peculiarly the idea of 'false consciousness' characterized by a manipulative intent:

> 'The physiocrats are not antipopulationists in opposition to the mercantilists of the preceding epoch; they frame the population problem in a different way. For them, the population is not simply the sum of subjects who inhabit a territory, a sum that would be the result of each person's desire to have children or of laws that would promote or discourage birth - it is a variable dependent on a number of factors. These are not all natural by any means (the tax system, the activity of circulation, and the distribution of profit are essential determinants of the population rate). *But this dependence can be rationally analyzed, in such a way that the population appears as 'naturally' dependent on multiple factors that may be artificially alterable*' (Foucault, 1997a, p. 70, emphasis added).

The state is decentred in the interpretation of power as 'government at a distance.' Some of Althusser's followers adopted Foucault's aspirations in grappling with the issue of determinism (e.g., Poulantzas, 1978; Therborn, 1982), though the state for them mainly remained a significant element of the social order. As Poulantzas commented (1978, p. 81): 'State-monopolized physical violence primarily underlines the techniques of power and mechanisms of consent: it is in the web of the disciplinary and ideological device, and even when not directly exercised, it shapes the materiality of the social body upon which domination is brought to bear.' It is also noteworthy that while Althusser's main position builds on the recognition

of the leading role of the state and its embeddedness in the interests of the dominant social group, the state is defined rather broadly. It incorporates not only repressive apparatuses, but also non-public institutions and practices, viewed to be elements of the ideological structure (Rehmann, 2013). Foucault's discipline is of the same mode, but being separated from sovereignty and the ontology of production, it appears detached from the domain of political struggle (ibid.). This possibility to de-ground the social order has fascinated Foucauldian scholarship for a while, though a discontent with the 'flat ontology' has emerged and continues to grow (see Rodin, 2017 for the related discussion).

Althusser, as discussed earlier, attempted to account for contingency introducing the notions of 'overdetermination' and 'structural causality,' while Foucault put in flux knowledge and power (Rehmann, 2013). Some commentators perceive continuity between the teacher and the student, claiming that Althusser's innovation contributed to the development of Foucault's postmodern relativism (Söderberg, 2017). Söderberg (2017) suggests that Althusser's view on 'expressive totality' opened up a possibility for thinking a plurality of social actors enjoying a force. However, Foucault's thought eventually went much further to leave behind any specific point of reference.

Governmentality as biopower

Foucault's 1978–1979 lectures establish governmentality in terms of the character of the state; the main concern is for the mechanisms of state-supported promotion of population wellness (Lemke, 2013). Power appears at this point as less oppressive and definitely productive, mainly centralized, embedded in institutions and practices, and thus perfectly fitting the analytical agenda of the studies on ideological state apparatuses (Rehmann, 2013). Moreover, one cannot miss Foucault's focus on reproduction in the notion of biopower, closely associated with welfarism, and an overlap of different power forms (see for the related discussion in Rodin, 2017). The proximity of sovereignty, discipline, and biopower reminds us about a 'double functioning' of ideological apparatuses (Montag, 1995, p. 69): IRA and ISA can be both oppressive and persuasive, but one of those functions tends to dominate. Althusser explained this duality in line with Spinozian monism. As summarized by Montag:

> 'If we take seriously Althusser's statement that 'we think with our bodies', then we can no longer understand the distinction between violence and ideology as a distinction between the external and the internal, between the domination exercised on bodies and the

> domination exercised on minds. Instead, we are forced to acknowledge the 'consubstantiality' of force and persuasion, that there is no persuasion (or activity at all) of minds, except insofar as it is immanent in force that may be overwhelming or subtle, force that inflicts pain, damage, or death, or force that is quietly and unobtrusively physical, managing bodies and spaces with neither pain or harm' (ibid., p. 69).

Foucault's method is certainly distinct in his reliance on a 'nominalist' (Rehmann, 2013) view on power: power is a 'name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society' (Foucault in ibid., p. 204). Moreover, power is defined and analysed in essentialistic terms (Resch, 1992) with a focus on its non-subjective intentionality (Barrett, 1991). Such an approach locks in the notion of power and governmentality as a specific power form within the functionalist tradition (for a related discussion, see Rodin, 2017).

Governmentality as a type of political leadership

Governmentality, as a particular mode of 'political leadership,' puts the central emphasis on the discourses and technologies of the rule in different historical periods. Trying to explain various forms of government Foucault built on Gramsci's concept of hegemony (Rechmann, 2013). Thus welfarism, as interpreted by Resch (1992), is characterized by rationalization of surveillance: knowledge serves as a tool of control and domination. With a shift towards neoliberalism, power obtains positive connotations: it becomes motivating, facilitating, encouraging. Neoliberalism differentiates from the previous forms of government by its emphasis on methods and arrangements that account for individuals' self-management. In this way, technologies of the self become an analytical counterpart to the technologies of power (Rechmann, 2013)

Methods of maintaining political leadership of a dominant class are already familiar to readers from the classical Marxist interpretation of ideology as 'false consciousness.' Althusser, as earlier presented, added on the materiality of ideological training carried out by the non-state sector (ISA), while his successors (PIT) addressed the issue of 'horizontal socialization' (Rechmann, 2013). Foucault's further emphasis on the increasing importance of the civic sphere and individual psychodynamics in contemporary socio-economic life is a valuable contribution. However, his analysis of neoliberalism has been shown to lack a clear explanation of relationships between domination and self-steering (ibid.). Power had eventually vanished from his elaborations (along with the very idea of counter-

action), giving way to empowering personal ethics (ibid.). The scholar eventually turned out to be himself interpellated by neoliberal ideology, and his critical distancing from the study object failed:

> 'Foucault's definitions coincide entirely with the ideological self-image of liberalism, which likes to imagine itself as a philosophy and politics that stand in opposition to state-regulation, and thereby represses the fact that in real history it manifested itself until the late nineteenth century primarily as a 'possessive individualism'…aiming at the maintenance of bourgeois property-relations, and frequently did so with the violent and disciplinary measures of the repressive state-apparatuses' (ibid., p. 309).

Foucault's departure from Marxism had started with his abandonment of class as a fundamental analytical category (Barrett, 1991). It found its completion in his turn to individual ethics. The critical capacity of Foucault's theorizing had diminished; this feature has been inherited by contemporary governmentality studies, as well (for a related discussion, see Rodin, 2017).

Developed against the backdrop of 1968's revolutionary events, Althusser's theory of ideology addressed a request for explanatory innovations that could serve the needs of the new wave of political struggle in the context of late industrial capitalism (Balibar, 2014). A recognition of individualization of power relationships manifested in Althusser's description of interpellation: ideology addresses *concrete* individuals to turn them into subjects. This intimacy of voluntary compliance is characteristic of Foucault's writings as well. His ideas of discipline and biopower highlight the individualizing intent of power (Montag, 2005). Although Althusser maintained his loyalty to the fundamentals of Marxist thought (Dean, 2010). The idea of structural contradiction (and the related class struggle) is central for 'critical' and 'positive' connotations of ideology and ISA (Smith, 1984). In contrast, 'ideology in general' rests on an interpretation of structure in monistic terms and addresses the 'imagery constitution of the subject' (Balibar, 2014, p. xvi). Domination is viewed to be simultaneously oppressive and productive, but always all-embracing.

Conclusion

This paper has made productive efforts to review the existing conceptual luggage of Marxism, specifically the structural Marxist approach. I discussed Althusser's theory of ideology: its content, central critique, and developments in relation to other

compatible conceptions, the most salient of which is the idea of governmentality suggested by Foucault. The main challenge of this work has been a widespread assumption, articulated by Foucault himself, of strong dissimilarity between the two theoretical traditions. As demonstrated, a number of parallels can be drawn between the theory of ideology and the notion of governmentality. This includes attempts to resolve the problem of social dynamics, interest in both the material and the symbolic, special attention given to the mechanisms of subjection and analysis of 'pseudosovereignty' (Barrett, 1991, p. 147) as the central resource of domination, and recognition of individualization of power relationships. Overall, governmentality as 'governing at a distance' and biopower appear to resemble Althusser's presentation of ideology, in both generic and particular modes. Whether those similarities are effects of generational continuity (Söderberg, 2017), direct appropriation (Resch, 1992), a shared starting point of theorizing (Ryder, 2013), or rather of a 'dialogue' between the two emerging traditions (Lock, 1996), is difficult to establish. Foucault's unique contribution is a description of neoliberalism as a form of political leadership, a social-political phenomenon he witnessed. However, without a structural grounding, the related theoretical discussion and empirical studies tend to suffer in their analytical and critical potential.

A matter of 'philosophical fashion' in the 1960s and 1970s France, Althusser (and Althusserianism) is considered by many nowadays to be a 'dead dog' (Eliot, 2005, p. xiii) or at best a historical stage that has been left behind (Barrett, 1991). Several factors have contributed to this disregard: macro events, such as the fall of the socialist project in the USSR, which led to the discrediting of Marxism as a theoretical tradition; the particularity of social-political dynamics in Europe in general, characterized by the weakening of the labour movement; the rise of a new poststructuralist paradigm; and, finally, Althusser's controversial life events (ibid.). Balibar (1996, p. 109) suggests that Althusser's name is not just 'forgotten' but 'carefully repressed.' Nowadays, Foucault's theorizing seems to be in favour with academic audiences due to its promises (eventually fulfilled and not) addressed earlier in this text. However, not everyone agrees with the sharp differentiation between the two theoretical approaches. A number of proposals have arisen that attempt to merge elements of the theories of ideology and power/discourse in order to account both for a plurality of power agents, and for flexibility of power relationships (e.g., Purvis and Hunts, 1993; Poulantzas, 1978; Therborn, 1982). Governmentality theory, as demonstrated in the current paper, could be even to some extent substituted by Althusserian elaborations. Other interpretations have recognized strong structuralist themes within Foucault's writings and post-modernist indicators within Althusser's work (Callari and Ruccio, 1996). Foucault's ideas have been found 'compatible' with historical materialism and intelligible, primarily if historical materialism is 'taken as their starting point' (Poulantzas, 1978, p. 68).

Critical reflections over Althusser's epistemological findings and the legacy of his ideas may facilitate a deeper understanding of the potential and limitations of the Marxist tradition and its alternatives.

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