

# Dispositif, Biopolitical Governance, and Significance of Genealogical Approach in Navigating Refugees' Experiences of Camp and Community

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# Dispositif, Biopolitical Governance, and Significance of Genealogical Approach

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## Abstract

Foucault's distinction between biopolitics and biopower is significant to society, a normative body in terms of seeing biopower as the practical production of the visible and invisible poles of the dispositif through interdependent discursive and institutional practices of administration. This paper fundamentally discusses two theoretical ideas ingrained with the notion of Foucauldian biopolitics---dispositif and genealogy that Foucault brought into account for merging them into modern biopolitical administrative forces. First, it discusses the idea of dispositif as a mechanism of governance and critically examines its connection to biopower and biopolitics. Second, it analyzes the notion of genealogy as a tool to navigate the politics of forced migration and refugees' local memories, discursive construction, and fragmentation of previously-coherent ideas and practices and the cohering of formerly disparate ones through a lens that does not privilege the present as the destination of the past.

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## Dispositif: Elements of Biopolitical Governance

The Foucauldian notion of biopolitics has become decisive in showing the importance of connecting it to his use of the term *dispositif*. *Dispositif* refers in Foucault's writings to the mechanism of governance in a broad sense. It stands for the disposition or distribution of tools and mechanisms of governance applied to the definition and governance of *objects* of governance (individuals and groups, economic and social relations, social, political, and economic forces, resources, etc.) characteristic of a particular example or apparatus or regime of governmentality. A governmental apparatus on, say, a national scale, deals with multiple administrative forces to control, regulate, and govern a population.

Foucault linked the concept of *dispositif* (apparatus) to the eighteenth-century French physiocratic economists who developed theories of the circulation of wealth in terms of scarcity, security, and order, but who also sought to establish economics as a systematic science of the promotion and distribution of "happiness."<sup>1</sup> Foucault saw in physiocratic economics the birth of a new form of power/knowledge distinct from sovereignty and elaborated on the concept of *dispositif* to signify the elements of governance focused on an orderly disposition of things, people, flows, and forces in a way that accords with the development of modern disciplinary techniques and security apparatuses. Discipline for Foucault is centripetal in the sense that it "concentrates, focuses, and encloses" its techniques

and that which it acts on, whereas security is centrifugal in the broader sense of ordering large-scale and expansive phenomena such as national and international markets, the generalized forms and operations of "production," and the *distribution* of "buyers," "consumers," and "producers," and of their various "psychologies" and "behaviors," across economies and populations.<sup>2</sup> Foucault elaborates:

What I'm trying to pick out with this term [*dispositif*] is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements. Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements. Thus, a particular discourse can figure at one time as the programme of an institution, and at another it can function as a means of justifying or masking a practice which itself remains silent, or as a secondary re-interpretation of this practice, opening out for it a new field of rationality. In short, between these elements, whether discursive or non-discursive, there is a sort of interplay of shifts of position and modifications of function which can also vary very widely. Thirdly, I understand by the term "apparatus" a sort of—shall we say—formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an *urgent need*. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the College de France, 1977-78*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Foucault, *Security, territory, population*, .

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*, (New York: Vintage, 1980), 194–95

An “apparatus” signifies the relationship of heterogeneous elements—e.g., discourses, social institutions, laws, forms of practice, and scientific and non-scientific statements—in a state or state-related mechanism. An apparatus for Foucault is an ensemble of elements, such as those mentioned above, that may function differently in different times and situations and in different relations to each other. Foucault defines apparatus as constitutive of a program or rule for an institution, while at the same time “masking” certain of its practices. Foucault highlights the manner in which such apparatuses operate in terms of practical security or risk-reduction measures to control, mobilize, or normalize situations and people through social mechanisms such as police, hospitals, schools, prisons, and other such institutions.

The security apparatus of the state, in terms of which the state protects its sovereignty and *defines its scope of governance* by delineating in practice a national “society” and “territory,” in order to create a space in which security apparatuses are positioned to produce the “conduct of conduct;” a space with the potential to be populated by the “othered” produced by police and security work.<sup>4</sup> *Dispositif* has to do with networks and practices of power that transform humans into subjects and objects of a power that does not manifest itself in terms of the classical (European) understanding of sovereignty.<sup>5</sup> Addressing the political effects on social life and the “exceptional potential of

politics” of this new configuration of sovereignty with governmental power, Datta finds a certain parallel between the Durkheimian term “totem” and the Foucauldian term *dispositif*, in that both concepts refer to the historical and social structuring of human existence in terms of the intersection of power, bodies, and social institutions.<sup>6</sup>

The similarity here between *dispositif* and “totem”<sup>7</sup> is that both involve an assemblage of practices, rules, and entities from which emerges a cohesive whole or symbolic body that addresses the formation of a social body. The idea of dealing with and discussing biopolitics and biopower in this paper is informed by the notion of an assemblage as the ways in which a biopolitical manifold (the spectrum of biopolitical functioning in which the politics of managing population and the politics of letting these populations die merge together for example manage-neglect treatment of refugees in the refugee camps) is put together or assembled from many disparate discursive and institutional elements and practices, which are often re-purposed in the process. Such assemblages may have no meta-philosophical center; they are put together in response to particular social situations, movements, opportunities, or challenges: for example, the particular challenges involved in defining and managing refugee “camp” and “community” and organizing transitions between them. Different biopolitical manifolds operate on refugees from their displacement to

<sup>4</sup> Ronjon Paul Datta, “Security and the void: aleatory materialism contra governmentality,” in *Anti-Security*, ed. by Mark Neocleous & George S. Rigakos (Ottawa: Red Quill Books, 2011) 217–242.

<sup>5</sup> Tom Frost, “The dispositive between Foucault and Agamben,” *Law, Culture, and the Humanities*, 15, no. 1 (2019): 151–171.

<sup>6</sup> Ronjon Paul Datta, “Politics and existence: Totems, dispositif and some striking parallels between Durkheim and Foucault,” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 8, no. 2 (2008): 283–305.

<sup>7</sup> William Ramp, “Paradoxes of sovereignty: Toward a Durkheimian analysis of monarchy,” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 14, no. 2 (2014): 233.

assignment to the camps, and even in the transition to the neoliberal political apparatus of advanced capitalism in modern society, impacting their lives in one way or other, producing and reproducing variations of refugee-ness.

### **Biopower as the Practical Production of Dispositif**

Foucault seems to have been influenced by the Durkheimian concept of totem to develop a sense of the *dispositif* as a biopolitical association of the notion of a population with that of “society” as a normative body. Foucault’s distinction between biopolitics and biopower is significant to this in terms of seeing biopower as the practical production of the visible and invisible poles of the *dispositif* through interdependent discursive and institutional practices of administration. The particular arrangement of tangible and intangible qualities at work in a governmental apparatus both reflects and produces its biopolitics. Thus, it is important to examine such apparatuses not as mere reflections of a biopolitical template nor as simply “applying” such a template to the exercise of biopower. Rather, they are themselves shaped by the practical techniques and strategies – the ways of doing, knowing, and speaking – that make up biopower.

For this, Foucault recommended a close and detailed genealogy of the historical formation and transmutation of power dynamics, both in the political dimension and in the *arts* of

power. These historical elements typically tend to have been unheard of and marginalized in accounts of the development of security and management apparatuses of neoliberal governments today. They are important because they point to contradictions between neoliberal concepts of sovereignty (sovereignty of the individual and a minimalist role for the state) and the actuality of its practice (imposing austerity using state mechanisms as disciplinary tools; identifying and policing non-compliant, “unproductive” or “parasitical” populations; enacting security and border-control measures; facilitating the movement of capital across borders while restricting the movement of people). The practical mechanisms and techniques of biopower have contributed to the creation of refugee subjects, to the definition, imposition, or negotiation of “refugee-ness” labels, to the control and normalization of refugees, and to attempts to reinforce the definition of camps as *unpolitical* spaces of (paradoxically) *politicized* containment. Governmentality is centrifugal; it spreads power from the centrality of authority to the distributed arrangement of the population, acting not only through objectification but also through subjectification for self-governance and self-regulation, which is essential to the apparatus of neoliberal biopolitical government.<sup>8</sup> It brings into being, as Durkheim anticipated, a political system that an individual may be led to “buy into” or strive for, not simply as a guarantor of rights but as a provider of forms of security and risk-reduction,

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<sup>8</sup>Michel Foucault, *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the College de France, 1977-78*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), .; Ramp, “Durkheim and Foucault”, .; Datta, “Security and the void,” .; Benjamin Muller, “Globalization, security, paradox: Towards a refugee biopolitics,” *Refuge: Canada’s Journal on Refugees* 22, no. 1 (2004): .; Randy Lippert,

“Governing refugees: The relevance of governmentality to understanding the international refugee regime,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 24, no. 3 (1999): .; Stephen Legg, “Subject to truth: Before and after governmentality in Foucault’s 1970s.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 5 (2016):.

standards of normalcy, and of “services” such as health and education.<sup>9</sup>

The discourses of governmentality are thus produced both through social agencies and through individual agencies not only in a so-called political community but also in the refugee population in camps. In techniques of biopolitical governance, both are recruited into a politics of productive, functional and self-normalizing life: a politics of “making live and letting die”.<sup>10</sup>

Biopolitics takes the imperative of maximizing individual lives and the population as its subject; biopower teaches, monitors, and polices the practice of individual self-government and normalization, and encourages biopolitical subjects to seek appropriate services for their needs: health care, education, and security, but also entertainment and leisure, because happiness has come to be treated as a measure of productivity and order, and vice versa. I argue further that the government of the living and the practices of dying (or of letting die) in modern biopolitics occur simultaneously through a double movement of politicizing and de-politicizing. This double movement designates supposedly unpolitical spaces of othering while defining and securing the spaces of the political. This securing, I argue, occurs not only through the positive promotion of life, happiness, and productivity, but through the variable designation and production of *risks and threats* to biopolitical space through practices of surveillance, policing, detainment, imprisonment, and various other ways of separating off those seen as sources of

risk, subversion, or disorder. Here, we seem to return to Giorgio Agamben, but to add that the unpolitical is now typically *defined politically*. This definition occurs less through the act of a sovereign who floats above society, politics, and the law, than through *politicized forms of administration* that sort through groups of people, legitimating some and delegitimizing others in the name of a national *society*, or a *people*. It is this *modern* form of expulsion that defines and impacts the precarious lives (lived experiences of refugee population in refugee camps and outside) and forms of death for which Mbembe developed the concept of necropolitics.<sup>11</sup>

To examine every dynamic of refugee and forced immigration, a theoretical and methodological framework is needed for establishing a genealogy of the problems. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975) Foucault employed genealogy as a sort of historical ethnography to study the development and transformation of particular linkages between the European penal system and political apparatuses, between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries. Whereas ‘archaeology’, which Foucault defined as the study of the articulation of discourse and institutional practices at a given point in or ‘layer’ of time, genealogy explores specific discursive and institutional transformations that occur over time. Genealogical research is specific, detailed, and empirical, but not positivist because it does not take for granted a ‘developmental’ significance conventionally supplied from present-day discourse to the particular objects it examines.

<sup>9</sup> William Ramp, “Durkheim and Foucault on the genesis of the disciplinary society.” In *Durkheim and Foucault: Perspectives on education and punishment*, ed. by Mark S. Cladis, (Oxford: Berghahn, 1999), .

<sup>10</sup> Datta, “Security and the void,” 8.

<sup>11</sup> Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*. (London: Duke University Press, 2019), .

Genealogy takes the exercise, practice, and employment of power to be multivalent, contingent and polysemic; to study power is a matter of painstaking reconstruction rather than “sifting” through “evidence” to find items of “significance” and discard the rest.

### **Biopolitics and Forced Displacement: Importance of Genealogical Approach**

The genealogical approach is noteworthy for focusing on the emergence of specific occurrences, practices, things or issues that have been ignored, marginalized, or made invisible in conventional histories. Arguably, there are many questions to be raised concerning what has been displaced from view in the emergence into visibility of contemporary definitions of refugees and forcibly displaced people and of the issues they face. Genealogy studies the *particular* discursive construction over time of different forms of narrative coherence from which emerge new formations of social, political, and cultural issues, new ways of defining centers and margins, new ways of designating uniformities and differences, new ways of being subjects and objects, new distinctions between the coherence and incoherence of events and explanations. Genealogy explores the fragmentation of previously coherent ideas and practices and the cohering of formerly disparate ones through a lens that does not privilege the present as the *destination* of the past. As a method, genealogy dynamically applies a sensitivity to heterogeneity in examining the constitution of discourses that make biopolitical intervention in managing and regularizing the population something “evident” or “obvious.”

Research for Foucault was experimental, focused on the *local* and *practical* construction of coherence that allowed for particular discourses about sociopolitical or socioeconomic “reality” to take form. The reason Foucault took the practices and architectures of the prison and the penitentiary as objects of study in *Discipline and Punish* was to find a way of reviving the Nietzschean program of the “genealogy of morals” to understand punishment not in terms of questions about what was punished and why, but in terms of *how* punishment was exercised and how the transformation of how punishment was practiced and produced new subjects, new objects, and a new landscape in which they were deployed; one in the image of “society” and the “self” rather than of sovereignty and subjection.<sup>12</sup>

Foucault’s objective in the investigation of the prison was not a standard discussion of ‘institutions,’ ‘theories,’ and ‘ideology,’ but of ‘practices’— ‘the regimes of practices’—the place or situatedness of specific kinds of practices through which new rules were formulated and imposed, new procedures were enacted, and new institutional and discursive regimes were constituted in a very specific time window.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, the Foucauldian genealogical approach is a substantive method for approaching and deconstructing complex questions rather than “answering” them. Thus, applying a genealogical approach to subjects such as human displacement, refugees, migration, and power relations in humanitarian regimes necessitates a willingness to suspend conventional definitions, the conventional narrative structures of histories of human rights and

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<sup>12</sup> Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), .

<sup>13</sup> Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *The Foucault effect*, .

human displacement, conventional ways of framing the “truths” of refugee lives, and conventional ways of framing agendas concerning refugees, whether “progressive” or “reactionary.” This makes genealogy useful not only to “make the familiar strange” in the context of Western historiography but also for understanding the specific development of non-Western political apparatuses, non-Western forms of state and governance, non-Western practices of inclusion and exclusion, and non-Western forms of power and discipline. Here, I must add that it would also be wrong simply to imagine we can replace a “Western” with a completely distinct “non-Western” point of view. In the development of imperialism and globalization, they have intersected and interact with and interpenetrated each other in many different ways and at different times and no longer exist (if they ever did) as pure and distinct conceptual entities or realities. Genealogy is thus the enemy of historical purism.

However, scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu have questioned whether the Foucauldian method was truly empirical.<sup>14</sup> Foucault responded concerning the method he employed for his research on prisons by saying that he had taken the prison as an object of investigation because the specificity of the organization of the prison had been neglected in previous research due to investigators’ priorities being either “the judicial problem of the penal system” or the “sociological problem of the criminal population”;<sup>15</sup> in other words, because

previous research had relied on stereotypically-defined discourses of crime and punishment that articulated particular agendas or issues of principle whose emergence was left unexamined, and that neglected actual practices, locations, and techniques of punishment, treating them either as immaterial or as signifiers of a generalized “progress” from barbarity to civilization.

Genealogy strengthens discourse analysis, and Foucault himself provided ways to analyze discourse genealogically to approach historical analysis more critically.<sup>16</sup> Foucauldian genealogy provides less of a “structured methodology,” but does offer a sharp interruption of philosophical and methodological debates over the definition of the object of knowledge and the nature and direction of our relationship with it situating both in the contingency of discursive formations and practices.<sup>17</sup> That is why Foucault claims that knowledge is not made for understanding but for cutting.<sup>18</sup> Foucault means that genealogy should problematize the metaphysics, continuities, and origin stories asserted or assumed in conventional history. In contrast to Agamben’s archaeological method, genealogy suspends and critiques these by gathering vast quantities of source materials without preselection according to established criteria of relevance, and by recognizing the jolts of items within the material gathered that indicate other ways of making sense of it.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Staf Callewaert, “Bourdieu, critic of Foucault: The case of empirical social science against double-game-philosophy.” *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 6 (2006): .

<sup>15</sup> Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *The Foucault effect*, .

<sup>16</sup> Derek Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’: Foucault and the work of critique”, *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 2, no.1 (2005):.

<sup>17</sup> Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”, .

<sup>18</sup> Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, genealogy, history,” in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), .

<sup>19</sup> Foucault, “Nietzsche, genealogy, history,” ; Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”, .



Thus, genealogy is not oriented to the framing of knowledge and the innovation of truth, but the generation of critique.<sup>20</sup> Genealogy is not a static research methodology that cultivates and produces the same product over and over; it is, instead, a tactical strategy for engendering a potential plurality of new knowledges, questioning both its own production of these and existing methods of research and modes of constructing truths. It focuses on a specific examination of how power is not only exercised but produced, and how discourses take shape in particular historical moments. In the work of genealogy, knowledge is epistemological, critical, and political in its specific formation and modes of operation; it does not seek to produce a dichotomy of truth and falsity; nor an account of “motives,” good or bad. Genealogy, different from other research methods, produces knowledge for generativity; a knowledge which is ‘operative’; which identifies the production of truth-effects in both existing knowledge and in resistances to it.<sup>21</sup> Genealogy takes a non-positivist and tactical relation to questions of truth, seeking to establish not *what is the truth* and *why*, but *how the particular* emergence of truths occurs and how such truths do or do not become discursively and practically hegemonic.<sup>22</sup>

Agamben argues, addressing Foucault, that genealogists “go to war” intellectually because they neglect to search the origin or prehistory of the things they address; instead, they find

the already-historical beginning of the things.<sup>23</sup> Agamben correctly notes that Foucault’s concept of genealogy can be traced to Nietzsche’s notion of an “effective” or “working” history; one which does not seek an original identity and queries metahistorical beginnings. Foucault’s understanding of genealogy does not set out to destroy history, but to give voice to that which a given historical account occludes and to open up space for counter-historical narratives.

Foucault argues that power is situational but present everywhere in a multitude of specific practices, tactics, and strategies, functioning horizontally in every sphere of human life. Foucault highlights an inseparable but contingent relationship between power and discourse in which our activities and subjectivities are formed, identified, claimed, enacted, reflected, controlled, or regulated through practical techniques and social or communicative strategies of the identification, surveillance, and regulation of individuals and populations. These are not only imposed on but can also produce and recruit their subjects.<sup>24</sup> Different mechanisms of power—such as sovereign power, disciplinary power, and biopower—function differently and not in a linear fashion, yet they also interact in specific and changing ways. One power (e.g., biopower) does not replace another (e.g., sovereignty).<sup>25</sup> The Foucauldian methodological approach to the study of power relations

<sup>20</sup> Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”, .

<sup>21</sup> Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”, ; Evangelia Sembou, *Hegel’s phenomenology and Foucault’s genealogy*. (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), ; Michel Foucault, “On the genealogy of ethics: An overview of work in progress,” in *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*, edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), .

<sup>22</sup> Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”, .

<sup>23</sup> Giorgio Agamben, “Philosophical archaeology,” *Law and Critique* 11, no. 3 (2009): ; William Watkin, “The signature of all things: Agamben’s philosophical archaeology,” *MLN* 129, no. 1 (January 2014): .

<sup>24</sup> Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-1976*, (New York: Picador Pan Macmillan, 2003), .

<sup>25</sup> Foucault, *Security, territory, population*, .

deconstructs the center not by proposing its historical replacement by another center, but by re-addressing the “meta”-components of history and politics as *produced* through changed historical and political *practices*.

### Navigating Refugees’ Local Memories through Genealogical Approach

The genealogical study of political practices and discursive formations allows for history writing focused on power-discourse relationships that produce or shape subjugating and subjugated knowledges.<sup>26</sup> In the term “subjugated knowledges,” Foucault includes “a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity”.<sup>27</sup> Foucault focuses on the importance of digging out specific occurrences or statements written by power, which are often embedded within hegemonic discourses, but which can be re-framed by patient analysis of their contexts and sources. A genealogical approach to historical investigation combines both scholarly knowledge and local memory.<sup>28</sup> In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault emphasizes that local memory can be placed into the margins due to a politics of exclusion. Who hears the local memories of the excluded, and why should it be essential to hear them? These are important questions, for example, for a genealogical approach to refugee research. Refugees’ local memory, which is socially, culturally, and politically grounded and guided, is essential to discuss in terms of their history and present

condition of living in a new social context. Local memory is knowledge grounded in indignity, but it can be overshadowed along with subjugated knowledge by dominant forms of power-knowledge. This notion of local memory as a prominent component of genealogical research is useful to navigate refugees’ political conditions associated with their biopolitical experiences from refugee camps to the community in their third country resettlement. Refugees possess a significant repository of local memories, e.g., their local memories of the country of their displacement, the camps, and of their arrival in the country of settlement. The interconnections and intersections of their individual memories produce shared local memories embedded in their narratives of violence, persecution, and displacement, as well as in their accounts of subsequent experience of neoliberal biopolitics. Foucault argues that ‘we can give the name ‘genealogy’ to this coupling together of scholarly erudition and the identification and contextual examination of local memories as discursive and narrative occurrences that allow us to constitute a different historical account of struggles and “to make use of that know-ledge in contemporary tactics.”<sup>29</sup>

Foucault emphasizes a critical and situated examination that shifts its ground away from a direct focus on or confrontation with the philosophical validity or truth-value of the representative “center” of social apparatuses and discourses that operate to hold power, govern society, and create knowledge. Rather, he asks how such centers are *produced* and how they *operate to produce* “truth effects” and regimes

<sup>26</sup> Foucault, *Power/knowledge*, ; Michel Foucault, *The archaeology of knowledge*, (Abingdon: Routledge Publications, 2002), .

<sup>27</sup> Foucault, *Society must be defended*, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Foucault, *Society must be defended*, .

<sup>29</sup> Foucault, *Society must be defended*, 8.

of power in *specific* contexts and in *specific* times. In this way, he deconstructs the constructed edifices of historical truth by exploring the political practices by which they were established. He does so not to advocate an alternative account of origins or of truth vs. falsity, nor to propose a new meta-solution to a philosophical problem or a set of problematic principles. When he states, “why not go on with such a theory of discontinuity, when it is so pretty and probably so hard to verify”,<sup>30</sup> he is *not* advocating a return to a focus on the established regime of ideas in itself. He is warning his readers away from an obsession with developing a philosophical theory of discontinuity. Instead, he advocates a careful, detailed, and methodologically-open examination of power dynamics—whether sovereign power, disciplinary power, or biopower—as they have operated within given social settings and occurrences and in terms of specific and different biopolitical mechanisms. This approach has been significantly important to navigate refugees’ multifaceted identities concerning their migration histories, experiences of being citizen and non-citizen, and displacements.

### Final Thoughts

In relation to this methodological orientation, Foucault also addressed the metatheoretical claims of Marxism and psychoanalysis, which were marginalized in the formal systematization of mainstream academic discourse. However, what Foucault termed an ‘insurrection of subjugated knowledge’ Hook also extends, in his hands, to a critique of both Marxism and

psychoanalysis.<sup>31</sup> Like Walter Benjamin, Foucault saw Marxism (and also psychoanalysis) as opening up a critique of history but also as a replacement of one historical metaphysics with another. More broadly, in his studies of psychiatric discourse, Foucault sought to privilege the voices of the psychiatrized and those diagnosed as “ill,” preserved but filtered and reinterpreted in diagnostic and other records.<sup>32</sup> Foucault refers to these voices as expressions of disqualified, nonconceptual, or naïve (popular, subjected, psychiatrized) knowledge, treated in conventional psychiatric histories as hierarchically inferior and as symptomatic of something *else* that only trained professionals can discern.<sup>33</sup> In agreement with Foucault, Hook argues that “it is only through the contexts of exclusion or disqualification—contexts marked by struggle, conflict and the violence of marginalization—that we can properly grasp the political force of knowledge.”<sup>34</sup>

Thus, a genealogical approach analyzes a range of discursive and social practices that have been marginalized and deprioritized since the seventeenth-century advent of modern historical, scientific, and political discourse and the new forms of knowledge associated with them. Genealogy, as a methodological tool for investigating historical occurrences, does not oppose scientific methods of investigation, but it problematizes the uncritical use of these to identify “discoveries” productive of “definitive” forms of knowledge.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the Foucauldian genealogical approach is productive to a study of displacement, the making of “non-citizens,” and the making of

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<sup>30</sup> Foucault, *Society must be defended*, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”, .

<sup>32</sup> Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”; ; Foucault, *Society must be defended*, .

<sup>33</sup> Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”; ; Foucault, *Society must be defended*, .

<sup>34</sup> Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Hook, “Genealogy, discourse, ‘effective history’”, .

refugees in the contemporary political practices of nation-states. The voices and subjectivities of displaced people and refugees have been ignored and deprioritized in modern regimes of truth, modern practices of knowledge-production, and modern practices of displacement and encampment carried out in relation to them. These constitute a production and imposition of specific forms of power and knowledge generated through surveillance, policing, and military force, border controls, camp management, and the particular priorities of nation-states that expel and criminalize populations, manage expelled populations at borders, allow such populations to be housed on their territories, or allow and facilitate their eventual resettlement. These take place in particular ways in global and local political contexts that may resemble or differ from their occurrence elsewhere. The point is to keep returning to that specificity, recognizing both divergences and convergences between global North and global South without essentializing either.

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