FOUCAULT
STUDIES
© Alessandro Volpi & Alessio Porrino
ISSN: 1832-5203
DOI: https://doi.org/10.22439/fs.i36.7222
Foucault Studies, No. 36, 350-376, September 2024

Article reuse guidelines:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

ARTICLE

History, Markets, and Revolutions: Reviewing Foucault's Contribution to the Analysis of Political Temporality

ALESSANDRO VOLPI & ALESSIO PORRINO
University Vita-Salute San Raffaele, Italy & University of Salerno, Italy

ABSTRACT. This article explores the Foucauldian analysis of the linkage between temporality and politics, addressing mainly two loci of Foucault's production: the assessment of the post-WWII ordoliberal experience in *The Birth of Biopolitics* and the Iran reportage for "Corriere Della Sera". The article emphasizes the relevance of Foucault's assessment of ordoliberal Germany for contemporary studies on neoliberalism and inscribes Foucault in a wider tradition of thought on the relevance of history and temporality for the comprehension of political dynamics. In *TBoB*, Foucault offered a prescient analysis of neoliberal temporality and its de-politicizing effects. In his view, ordoliberal theorists and politicians sought to ground political legitimacy in the economy itself, giving birth to a political-economic "double circuit" which did away with history and made political consensus "permanent" and automatic. The connection between neoliberalism, the re-structuring of state sovereignty, and temporality will be highlighted. Furthermore, by analyzing the almost-coeval Iranian reportages and the eulogy for Clavel, the article further investigates Foucault's reflection on the link between temporality, politics, and subjectivation processes. If the analysis of ordoliberal temporality in *TBoB* describes a linkage between de-temporalization and de-politicization, the reportages will be highlighted as a possible "pars construens" – as a way to reinstate the possibility of political action through the appeal to different ways to experience temporality. The article concludes that Foucault's sparse comments on temporality can be read as an attempt, albeit not fully developed, not only to envision the de-politicizing effects of marketization but also to envisage new, re-politicizing modes of experiencing temporality and history.

Keywords: Michel Foucault, neoliberalism, temporality, Iranian revolution, political spirituality

INTRODUCTION

There is a seemingly paradoxical *fil rouge* running through the history of 20th century political thought, connecting authors as diverse as Michel Foucault, Reinhard Koselleck,

Ernst Bloch, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, as well as contemporary thinkers such as David Harvey, François Hartog, Hartmut Rosa, and Mark Fisher. They have all been fascinated by the idea that the way temporality and history are conceived is of crucial importance to understanding political dynamics. Within such a heterogeneous fellowship, this fascination has been deployed in different ways and across quite distant historical and geographical contexts. In his landmark contribution, Koselleck attempted to demonstrate that one of the reasons why modernity had been the age of political revolutions is that it has understood history as unitary and as "progress".[1] In other words, envisioning radical change requires, as its condition of possibility, detaching from a "natural" or traditional conception of time in which past experience determines what is to be expected in the future. Henceforth, modern political change requires a conception of the future as always new, unknown, fast, and accelerating, enabling "new, transnatural, long-term prognoses" and utopias.[2] Similarly, Claude Lévi-Strauss defined "hot" societies (as opposed to "cold" societies) as those that "come to view it [the idea of history] as a tool by means of which they can act on the present and transform it, rather than as a disorder and a threat".[3] More recently, Hartog and Rosa, drawing on Koselleck, sought to describe the current "regime of historicity" as, respectively, inherently "*presentist*" and still, paradoxically, constantly experiencing "social acceleration".[4] The list could go on further. However, here a common motif can be observed among the authors: the idea that political change requires a socially shared conception of time and historicity in which change is at the very least *imaginable*.

This article inscribes Foucault in this wider – although certainly not unitary – scholarship. Moreover, it connects this insight to the scholarship on the Foucauldian legacy's direct impact on contemporary studies of neoliberal capitalism[5] and highlights the potential

---

[1] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* [1979] (2004).

[2] Ibid., 22.

[3] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Histoire et ethnologie," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 38:6 (1983), 1218, translated from François Hartog, *Presentism and Experiences of Time. Regimes of Historicity*, trans. Saskia Brown [2003] (2015), 25. Cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Scope of Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 7:2 (1966), 121.

[4] François Hartog, *Presentism and Experiences of Time* [2003] (2015); Hartmut Rosa, "Social Acceleration: Ethical and Political Consequences of a Desynchronized High-Speed Society," in *High Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power, And Modernity*, ed. H. Rosa and W. E. Scheuerman (2009), 77-111. For further reference to authors which could be inscribed in this tradition of thought, highlighting the linkage between political dynamics and social representation of time, see, for example, Georges Gurvitch, *The Spectrum of Social Time* (1963); Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* [1967] (1984); Ernst Bloch, *A Philosophy of the Future* [1963] (1970); Id., *Heritage of Our Times* (1990); Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* [1982], (2010); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1991); Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* [1992] 2006; Jean Baudrillard, *The Illusion of the End* [1992] (1994); Nancy D. Munn, "The Cultural Anthropology of Time: A Critical Essay," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21 (1992), 93–123; Hermann Lübbe, "The Contraction Of The Present," in *High Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power and Modernity* (2009); Jérôme Baschet, *Défaire la tyrannie du présent* (2018). On the role of Walter Benjamin within this tradition, cf. Alessio Porrino and Alessandro Volpi, "L'orologio e il calendario: Simbologia politica del tempo a partire da Walter Benjamin," *Materiali di Estetica. Terza serie* 8:2 (2021). For a comprehensive review, cf. Sabino di Chio, *Tempo irreale. Il restringimento dell'orizzonte temporale della tarda modernità* (2015).

[5] For example, cf. Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, *The Road from Mont Pèlerin. The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective* (2009); Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society* [2009], trans. Gregory Elliott (2017); Maurizio Lazzarato, *Il governo dell'uomo indebitato. Saggio sulla condizione neoliberista* (2013); Giandomenica Becchio, Giovanni Leghissa, *The Origins of Neoliberalism: Insights from*

for clarification and integration of the Marxist-inspired tradition of neoliberal studies.[6] In particular, it will be argued that the Foucauldian legacy remains highly undervalued in the literature on the interrelationship between neoliberal hegemony, modes of subjectivation, and "regimes of temporality". In what follows, we examine Foucault's interpretation of the temporality in which the post-war German Federal Republic came into existence as presented in the courses of 1978-1979 at College de France – published as *The Birth of Biopolitics* [2004] (2008). The Foucauldian interpretation of the GFR is compared with different authors' perspectives on political temporality, and its significance for the understanding of neoliberal "governmentality" and modes of subjectivation is highlighted.[7] In this light, original insights concerning the connection between political sovereignty, consensus, and the economy, as well as the liberal or illiberal character of neoliberalism, are elaborated through the Foucauldian analysis of the GFR's ordoliberal experience. Additionally, to further grasp the complex intertwining between temporality and political change, we consider Foucault's interpretation of the Iranian Revolution (1979)[8] and his comments on temporality in the eulogy for Maurice Clavel.[9]

The picture of neoliberal temporality that results from the present analysis aims to shed new light on our understanding of neoliberal capitalism and its distinctive cultural and subjective dynamics – and to possibly suggest new practices of resistance. Therefore, by examining Michel Foucault's underestimated contribution to the understanding of a *specifically neoliberal* temporality, we aim to foster a fresh look at an (already dense) present-day debate. A vast literature exists on Foucault's analysis of the linkage between temporality, historicity, and political regimes.[10] Similarly, a vast literature is dedicated to a critical assessment of Foucault's interpretation of neoliberalism in general and, more specifically, of the German post-war experience.[11] This article's novelty is mainly represented by

Economics and Philosophy (2016); Massimo De Carolis, *Il rovescio della libertà. Tramonto del neoliberalismo e disagio della civiltà* (2017); William Davies, *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty and the Logic of Competition* (2014); Grégoire Chamayou, *The Ungovernable Society: A Genealogy of Authoritarian Liberalism* (2021).

[6] As championed by David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005). For a comparison of the two traditions in neoliberal studies (Foucauldian- and Marxist-inspired) see Damien Cahill, Melinda Cooper, Martijn Konings and David Primrose, "Introduction: Approaches to Neoliberalism," in *The SAGE Handbook of Neoliberalism*, eds. D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings and D. Primrose (2018), xxv-xxxiii.

[7] Dardot and Laval, *New Way of the World*; Maurizio Lazzarato, *Il governo dell'uomo indebitato*.

[8] Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution* (2005).

[9] Michel Foucault, "Vivre autrement le temps" [1979], in *Dits et Écrits. 1954-1988* vol II, ed. Daniel Defert, François Ewald and Jacques Lagrange (2017), 788-790.

[10] Cf., for example, Kathrin Braun, "Biopolitics and Temporality in Arendt and Foucault," *Time & Society* 16:1 (2007), 5-23; Jürgen Portschy, "Times of power, knowledge and critique in the work of Foucault," *Time & Society* 29:2 (2020), 392-419; Mona Lilja, "The politics of time and temporality in Foucault's theorisation of resistance: ruptures, time-lags and decelerations," *Journal of Political Power* 11:3 (2018), 419-432; Judith Revel, *Foucault avec Merleau-Ponty. Ontologie politique, présentisme et histoire* (2015).

[11] To offer some recent examples, cf. David Šporer, "Contrast and History – Michel Foucault and Neoliberalism," *Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu* 15 (2022); Frieder Vogelmann, "Ordoliberalism as Political Rationality in Foucault's Genealogy of Liberalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ordoliberalism*, ed. Thomas Biebricher, et al. (2022); Lucas Trindade da Silva "Gênese da intelectualidade neoliberal segundo Michel Foucault," *Revista Pós Ciências Sociais* 16 :31 (2019), 181–207; Walter Reese-Schäfer, "Michel Foucaults

its explicit treatment of Foucault's analysis of post-war Germany concerning neoliberalism's specific temporality and its bringing together of insights on temporality from *The Birth of Biopolitics* with ones from the Iranian reportage and the eulogy for Maurice Clavel. We contend that between 1977 and 1979, the problematizations opened by Foucault converged toward a questioning of the relationship between subjectivity, temporality, and political praxis.[12] It builds on the idea that, already at the end of the 1970s, Foucault had foreseen crucial insights into neoliberal capitalism and the possibility of resisting it. Namely, he anticipated the idea that the widely documented reticence to political change in the era of neoliberal capitalism depends, among other factors, on a temporality in which political transformation is structurally unimaginable. The article supports this thesis with a novel interpretation of Foucault's writings on temporality and politics in post-war Germany and in the Iranian revolution.

A considerable number of scholars have already explored the relationship between neoliberal capitalism, temporality, and the possibility of political change.[13] In a way, the problem on which most of these contributions insist is how to explain neoliberal capitalism's "strange non-death"[14] vis-à-vis its countless political and economic failures[15] – among which is the climate catastrophe.[16] Fisher's "capitalist realism" is arguably one of the most well-known formulas to describe neoliberalism's sterilizing effect on political imagination, which is deeply tied to an end-of-history mentality that ended up naturalizing liberal capitalism as the end of human institutional evolution.[17] Foucault's assessment of post-war German "governmentality" demonstrated how ordoliberal ideas sought to

---

Interpretation des Ordoliberalismus in seinen Vorlesungen zur Gouvernementalität" in *Ideengeschichte als Provokation* (2019).

[12] The authors express their gratitude to one anonymous referee for having urged a clearer explanation of this article's original contribution vis-à-vis the existing literature. Cf. Sam Binkley, "The Work of Neoliberal Governmentality: Temporality and Ethical Substance in the Tale of Two Dads," *Foucault Studies* 6 (2008), 60-8 for a Foucauldian examination of neoliberal temporality, although focused on individuals' self-reproduction of ethical practices rather than on political temporality at large. For some insight on the topic, cf. Stephen Shapiro, "Foucault, Neoliberalism, Algorithmic Governmentality, and the Loss of Liberal Culture," in *Neoliberalism and Contemporary American Literature*, ed. Liam Kennedy and Stephen Shapiro (2019).

[13] Cf. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*; Paul Virilio, *Polar Inertia* (1999); Jean Baudrillard, *The Illusion of the End*; Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1992); François Hartog, *Presentism*; Rosa, "Social Acceleration"; Mark Fisher, *Capitalism Realism. Is There No Alternative?* (2009); Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *After the Future*, eds. Gary Genosko, Nicholas Thoburn (2011); Id., *Futurability: The Age of Impotence and the Horizon of Possibility* (2019); Slavoj Žižek, *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism* (2015); Massimo De Carolis, *Il rovescio della libertà*; Christos Boukalas, "No future: preemption, temporal sovereignty and hegemonic implosion. A study on the end of neoliberal time," *Constellations* 1:17 (2020).

[14] Colin Crouch, *The Strange Non-death of Neo-liberalism* (2011).

[15] Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2008); William Davies, *The Limits of Neoliberalism;* Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work* (2016); Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2017); Grégoire Chamayou, *The Ungovernable Society*.

[16] Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. The Climate* (2014).

[17] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History*. On the ideological significance of the "end of history" thesis, cf. Maurizio Ricciardi, *L'Eterna Attualità dell'Ideologia tra Individuo, Storia e Società*, in *Storia d'Europa e del Mediterraneo. Dal Medioevo all'Età della globalizzazione*, *VI. L'età Contemporranea* (vol. XIV), ed. G. Corni (2017), 741-743.

ground the political legitimacy and state sovereignty of the new Federal Republic on the preservation of market competition and economic prosperity. In his view, this move ended up creating a political-economic "double circuit" which produced a *permanent* consensus and legitimacy of the existing political order based on a "*breach in history*" and a "new dimension of temporality".[18] It appears, then, possible to draw a parallel between Foucault's analysis of the Federal Republic and the "capitalist realist" mechanism by which a "weakness of our imagination" makes it "easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of Earth and nature than the breakdown of late capitalism",[19] and thus to consider Foucault as one of the direct progenitors of the well-known motif. Furthermore, Foucault's argument sheds light on the connection between neoliberal, market-based temporality and state sovereignty – which has been regarded as "neoliberalism's greatest dilemma".[20] In this vein, this article suggests that Foucault's reflections on temporality in the Iranian reportages could be fruitfully interpreted as a "pars construens" to the negative critique of *The Birth of Biopolitics*. While the analysis of ordoliberal temporality describes a linkage between de-temporalization and de-politicization, the reportages (especially through the concept of "political spirituality") are interpreted as possible pathways to bring back political action through the appeal to different ways to experience temporality. The article concludes that Foucault's sparse comments on temporality can be read as an attempt, albeit not fully developed, not only to envision the depoliticizing effects of marketization but also to envision new, re-politicizing modes of experiencing temporality and history.

FOUCAULT AND ORDOLIBERAL GERMANY[21]

Let us first briefly recall some historical background for post-war West Germany. In the peculiar circumstances in which the Basic Law, the constitution of the Federal Republic

[18] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1978–79* [2004], ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (2008), 86.
[19] Fredric Jameson, *The Seeds of Time* (1994), xii.
[20] William Davies, *The Limits*, 32.
[21] In this article, we assume the hypothesis that ordoliberalism (also known as German neoliberalism) and Austro-American neoliberalism (as Foucault himself distinguishes them in Michel Foucault, *The Birth*, 77-80) can be reasonably paralleled as two different variants of the same doctrinarian core and of the same communal "enemies", and that it is appropriate to study them together (cf. Dardot and Laval, *The New Way*, 86-116; Davies, *The Limits*; Ralf Ptak, "Neoliberalism in Germany: Revisiting the Ordoliberal Foundations of the Social Market Economy," in *The Road from Mont Pelerin*, eds. Philip Mirowski et al. (2009), 98-138). Dieter Plehwe praises Foucault for his original insight in juxtaposing the two traditions, cf. Dieter Plehwe, "Introduction," in *The Road from Mont Pelerin*, 2. To offer an oversimplifying schematization, the most important communal points are their consideration of the marketplace and of competition as bearers of normative and legitimizing value for political institutions; moreover, they both form their ideas in opposition to Keynesianism, state interventionism, dirigisme, and economic planning. The main differences are that ordoliberalism never questioned the role of a strong state as a guarantee of free competition, while the Austro-American variant (from von Mises and Hayel to Milton Friedman, and so on) appears even less enthusiastic about state intervention and anti-trust law. Scholars usually recognize early-ordoliberals and early American neoliberals to be much closer than ordoliberals and the so-called second generation of the Chicago School, which slowly diverges: "The core dynamic of both Ordoliberalism and so-called 'paleoliberal' neoliberalism is marketisation.

(*Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*), was approved in 1949, it was impossible to legitimize it through the appeal to popular will – given that no German state was currently in place. Nevertheless, that did not prevent the new constitution and the new state from obtaining political legitimacy on the domestic and international levels. Originally applying to the three zones occupied by the Western Allies, the Basic Law had to be approved by the Allied forces before coming into effect, and it was never ratified by a popular national assembly – as the Weimar Constitution had been.[22] In the meantime, amid the reconstruction process, the need to reassure the Allies and foreign investors that the new German state would not pursue "strong state" politics, either in the socialist or the fascist way, pushed the young Federal Republic to rediscover the ideas of the Ordoliberal economic school, elaborated since the 1930s by, among others, Alexander Rüstow, Wilhelm Röpke, Alfred Müller-Armack, and Walter Eucken's *Freiburger Schule*.[23]

In this vein, Ordoliberal economists and politicians inaugurated a program of liberalization and deregulation. They established a free-market economy in West Germany as a "third way" to post-war economics that was radically different from the Keynesian hegemony that was at that time dominating most of the Western countries' political agenda.[24] Ludwig Erhard, director of economics at the Bizonal Economic Council[25] from 1948, and later Minister of Economic Affairs under the chancellery of Konrad Adenauer (from 1949 to 1963) and chancellor of West Germany (1963 – 1966), is undoubtedly the protagonist of this shift. Following what Ptak calls the "basic Ordo mindset",[26] including the belief in an economic "natural order" that Eucken, Böhm, and Röpke evoked in their writings, Erhard progressively eliminated every price and salary control, cutting taxes on capital and profits drastically.[27] Significantly, as Foucault himself pointed out, Erhard started to implement these policies even before the BL came into effect and the new state was created – in effect as a pre-constitutional move.[28] Ordoliberals aimed to implement

Efficient markets, regulated by the price mechanism, are seen as the raison d'être of successful capitalism. For both, the most crucial condition for market efficiency is competition", Philip G. Cerny, "In the Shadow of Ordoliberalism," *European Review of International Studies* 3:1 (2016), 78-92. Moreover, Americans highly value the use of neo-classical economics models as a panacea to avoid metaphysical justifications, while ordoliberals tend to be more sceptical and justify economic decisions on the basis of a general principle of justice (Ibid.; Cf. Ralf Ptak, *Neoliberalism in Germany*; William Davies, *The Limits*). For a problematization of this position, see Brigitte Young, "Contemporary Anglo-Saxon Neoliberalism is not German Ordoliberalism," in *The SAGE Handbook*, eds. Damien Cahill et al., 179-189. Finally, according to Cerny, after the global financial crisis and the Eurozone crisis, both the 'schools' converged again; "they have become more regulatory and interventionist de facto, what I call 'post-Ordoliberalism'" (2).

[22] Dieter Grimm, "The Basic Law at 60 – Identity and Change," *German Law Journal* 11:1 (2010), 33–46; Id., *Sovereignty: The Origin and Future of a Political and Legal Concept* (2015).

[23] For an overview of the "Ordo school," cf. Ptak, *Neoliberalism in Germany*. On the political reassurance function of the ordoliberal turn for the newly born German state, see Michel Foucault, *The Birth*, 83-84.

[24] Plehwe, "Introduction," in *The Road*, 27-8. Cf. Ralf Ptak, *Neoliberalism in Germany*, 100.

[25] The areas controlled by the Anglo-American forces.

[26] Ptak, *Neoliberalism*, 105.

[27] Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* [2010] (2013), 51. Cf. Nick Srnicek, *Inventing*.

[28] Michel Foucault, *The Birth*, 83-4.

"an alternative third way to the Keynesian welfare and planning state right after World War II—the social market economy [*soziale Marktwirtschaft*]".[29]

Although the purely ordoliberal parenthesis was not to last long, given that by the 1970s West Germany had already fully shifted towards a Keynesian model and that Erhard always encountered strong opposition in the implementation of the ordoliberal plan,[30] there seems to be wide consensus in the literature on the crucial significance of that political experience for the understanding of fin de siècle global neoliberalism.[31]

Michel Foucault's course at College de France in 1978-1979, first published in French in 2004, had a leading role in establishing a robust connection between elements of the post-war German experience and the emergence of neoliberal ideas and practices (which he would address as neoliberal "governmentality")[32] on the global stage since the end of the 1970s. In the Foucauldian analysis, the crucial problem for establishing a new German state was one of *legitimization*: how to create legitimacy for a state that could not, for obvious reasons, appeal to historical continuity with the past nor to institutional or legal continuity, nor refer to any form of plebiscitary popular will? In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault commented that:

> It is not possible to claim juridical legitimacy inasmuch as no apparatus, no consensus, and no collective will can manifest itself in a situation in which Germany is on the one hand divided, and on the other occupied. So, there are no historical rights, there is no juridical legitimacy, on which to find a new German state (82).

In this respect, Foucault stresses the programmatic importance of a speech by Erhard from 1948. On that occasion, Erhard declared that "[w]e must free the economy from state controls" and that "[w]e must avoid […] both anarchy and the termite state, […] [because] only a state that establishes both the freedom and responsibility of the citizens can legitimately speak in the name of the people" (80). In Foucault's reading, Erhard was hinting at something much more radical than simple laissez-faire liberal reforms as merely economic measures – as they were contemporaneously being implemented in Belgium and

---

[29] Plehwe, "Introduction," 27.

[30] Alfred C. Mierzejewski, "1957: Ludwig Erhard's Annus Terribilis," *Essays in Economic and Business History* 22 (2004), 17–27.

[31] Mirowsky et al., *The Road*; Pierre Dardot et al., *New Way* (who mainly focus on the ordoliberal influence on the EU, 216-234). However, Foucault does not seem to fully appreciate the limitedness of the ordoliberal experience in West Germany, as can be seen in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, where he states that "this discourse of something which will remain a fundamental feature of contemporary German governmentality" (84). Although his analysis of German early neoliberal governmentality is of much importance for this contribution, it appears that Foucault in these 1978-9 courses might be underestimating the rapid Keynesization of the German economy form the 1960s onwards, when "changing conditions for economic growth undermined not only the social market economy itself, but also the ideological efforts it entailed (a 'third way') to legitimize market oriented politics rather than some vision of comprehensive welfare" and "the model increasingly lost its original neoliberal content", Ralf Ptak, *Neoliberalism*, 127. Cf. Nick Srnicek, *Inventing the Future*.

[32] For a definition of "government" and "governmentality" see Michel Foucault, "Du gouvernement des vivants" [1980], in *Dits et Écrits. 1954-1988* vol. II (2017), 944-948, 944; Id., "Les techniques de soi" [1988], in ibid., 1602-1632, 1604.

Italy (81). He was hinting at something that directly concerned a new approach to state-building and legitimization:

> Erhard is saying that in the current state of affairs […] it is clearly not possible to lay claim to historical rights for a not yet reconstituted Germany and for a still-to-be-reconstituted German state when these rights are debarred by history itself (82, emphasis added).

In Foucault's point of view, Erhard's apparently banal statement retrospectively acquires a greater historical significance. While "[h]istory had said no to the German state […] now the economy will allow it to assert itself" (86). In the absence of the possibility of turning to history, continuity to the past, international law, or popular will to legitimize the new state, the ordoliberal project looked at the economy and the preservation of economic freedom. Foucault maintains that there is a significant difference between a state that aims to exercise its sovereignty right and be representative of its citizens, and the new German state, which "rediscovers its law, its juridical law, and its real foundation *in the existence and practice of economic freedom*" (85, emphasis added).

What does this *economic genesis of the state* imply for state sovereignty, public law, and political participation? Through a thought experiment, Foucault argues that in a society in which the state solely exists to guarantee a "space of economic freedom", and in which "any number of individuals freely agree to play this game of economic freedom guaranteed by the institutional framework" (85), the economy will *short-circuit* traditional state sovereignty. Any of those unconstrained individuals would, in effect, manifest their *political* (and not merely economic) consensus by the sheer act of participating in the economic game. Therefore,

> it would imply that consent has been given to any decision which may be taken to guarantee this economic freedom or to secure that which makes this economic freedom possible. In other words, the institution of economic freedom will have to function, or at any rate will be able to function as a siphon, as it were, as a point of attraction for the formation of a political sovereignty (83, emphasis added).

Adhering to the economic game guaranteed by the new state implies, henceforth, automatically conferring legitimization and sovereignty to the new institutional arrangement. Therefore, in the case of post-war Germany, which can be thus defined as a mature "economic state" (86), the economy *precedes* the very formation of the state and the approval of the new constitution both *logically* and *chronologically*.[33] In this vein, according to Maurizio Ricciardi, to rebalance the relationship between economy and law, ordoliberalism sought to *ground legal norms in the economic order* so that law could understand it as a juridical constitution.[34] It is the economy (or, we could say, private law), in effect, which creates public law and legitimizes it, hereafter creating a "double circuit" between market

[33] Cf. William Davies, *The Limits*.

[34] Maurizio Ricciardi, "Tempo, ordine, potere. Su alcuni presupposti concettuali del programma neoliberale," *Scienza & Politica. Per una storia delle dottrine* 29:57 (2017). Cf. Werner Bonefeld, "Freedom and the Strong State: On German Ordoliberalism," *New Political Economy* 17:5 (2012), 633–56.

and public law (86). Furthermore, this *economic genealogy* of the state is not simply understandable as a once-and-for-all act of foundation, as it gets endlessly reproduced ("*permanent* genesis") in the everyday functioning of the state-guaranteed free market.

> there is a circuit going *constantly* from the economic institution to the state; and if there is an inverse circuit going from the state to the economic institution, it should not be forgotten that *the element that comes first* in this kind of siphon *is the economic institution*. There is a *permanent genesis*, a *permanent genealogy* of the state from the economic institution (84).[35]

History, then, has no place at all in the constitutional arrangements and the "political unconscious"[36] of the Federal Republic. Situated in an "eternal present", the market economy and its consuetudinary law kickstart the formation of state sovereignty – a kind of sovereignty for which the explicit consensus of the people is not needed, given that they are already participating in the economy.

ORDOLIBERAL TEMPORALITY AND PERMANENT CONSENSUS

What about the kind of political temporality in which the new German state is born? Foucault addresses the Federal Republic's "regime of historicity"[37] as characterized by a "reversal of the axis of time", at the heart of which lies the "permission to forget, and economic growth" (*The Birth of Biopolitics*, 86) that partly erases the responsibility for National Socialism and makes it possible to start anew:

> economic growth will take over from a malfunctioning history. It will thus be possible to live and accept the breach of history as a *breach in memory*, inasmuch as *a new dimension of temporality* will be established in Germany that will no longer be a temporality of history, but one of economic growth (86).

In more than one way, Foucault's analysis of neoliberal temporality can be inscribed into a wider scholarship on the literary and philosophical tradition of *posthistoire*.[38] Foucault himself in *The Order of Things* had already hinted at the paralyzing effect of the classical economic worldview on historical time, although on a different note.[39] Some of Foucault's

---

[35] Emphasis added. To make sense of Foucault's argument, it must be emphasized that, in the genealogy of the state in Ordoliberal Germany, the economic element comes *first* (both historically and logically, granted the validity of Foucault's interpretation). However, once the state is established on this ground, the economic-political "double circuit" which causes the genesis (genealogy) of the state to be permanent is activated. This, however, should not confuse the fact that the economic element has priority in the original establishment of the state, as there was no state at all when, as Foucault notices, Erhard started creating the legal bedrock of liberalization. Thanks to one anonymous referee for having prompted us to clarify this point.

[36] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* [1981], 2nd edition (2002).

[37] Which Hartog defines as "the modalities of self-consciousness that each and every society adopts in its constructions of time and its perception", François Hartog, *Presentism*, 9.

[38] Lutz Niethammer, *Posthistoire. Has history Come to an End?* (1992).

[39] In *The Order of Things* (1970) [1966] (pp. 278-282) Foucault had already explicitly addressed a linkage between classical economics analysis of wealth and the establishment of "the possibility of a continuous historical time, even if in fact […] Ricardo conceives of the evolution ahead only as a slowing down and, at

insights on the political effect of a new, ahistorical temporality have been independently elaborated by studies arguing for the existence of a solid connection between *posthistoire*, postmodernism, presentism, and neoliberal capitalism.[40] To provide a coeval example, the impossibility for the new German state to turn to history, as described by Foucault, parallels Lyotard's assessment of the postmodern age as the demise of historical "grand narratives" as mechanisms of political and epistemic legitimization.[41] The key point in establishing a similarity between Foucauldian analysis of neoliberal temporality and the posthistoric tradition is that – now turning again to Koselleck – without a conception of history that enables political imagination (in a way, *utopian* thinking), there is no possibility of criticizing the status quo and, consequently, kickstarting political transformation.[42]

As Mark Fisher argued, Fukuyama's End of History thesis, which can be considered the *naturalization* of liberal capitalism as the endpoint of human institutional development, has been uncritically integrated into most of the world's "political unconscious" as a vicious side effect of the spread of neoliberal governance and modes of subjectivation at the global level.[43] In the same vein, Alexandre Kojève, Fukuyama's primary reference for the idea of the end of history, in his 1930s seminars on Hegel had already mentioned an

most, a total suspension of history" (278). Foucault also seems to trace an explicit connection between the classical economics worldview and the *posthistoire* tradition of the 19th century, i.e., the feeling of a progressive "paralysis" of history, "petrification" and "impoverishment" (282). However, although the parallel with Foucault's later analysis of ordoliberal temporality is striking and should be considered, it does not appear fair to entirely superimpose the two analyses. First, it must be noted that in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, energic efforts are made to differentiate classical liberalism (and classical economists) from neoliberalism and to highlight the novelty of the ordoliberal experience most of all (cf. 86, 130-1, 162, 220, especially 247). See, for example: "Anyway, we are dealing with something new in comparison with everything that since the eighteenth century constituted the functioning, justification, and programming of governmentality" (86). On top of this, as we pointed out earlier, Foucault is quite explicit on the fact that the new German model in which an a-historical temporality is nested is the product of a peculiar historical contingency (i.e., the complete absence of state legitimacy after the Nazi period and of functioning governmental institutions) rather than an abstract economistic worldview. The authors express their gratitude to an anonymous referee for bringing this striking parallel to their attention.

[40] For an incomplete overview, see Jurgen Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne* (1985); Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism*; Id., "Preface," in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* [1979], ed. Fredric Jameson (1984); Seyla Benhabib, "Democracy and Difference: Reflections on the Metapolitics of Lyotard and Derrida," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 2:1 (1994); Terry Eagleton, "The Contradictions of Postmodernism," *New Literary History* 28:1 (1996), 1-6; Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason. The Intellectual Romance with Fascism from Nietzsche to Postmodernism* (2004); Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *After the Future*. Some scholars have accused Foucault himself and his focus on subjectivation of having pushed the Left into the "fraught terrain of identity politics", which would have, in turn, served the functioning of neoliberal capitalism rather than opposing it. For a critique of this position, cf. Johanna Oksala, "Neoliberal Subjectivation: Between Foucault and Marx," *Critical Inquiry* 49:4 (2023), 581–604.

[41] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*.

[42] Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past*. Cf. Gennaro Imbriano, *Le due modernità. Critica, crisi e utopia in Reinhart Koselleck* (2016). Concerning utopian thinking, cf. Alessandro Volpe (ed.), *Storia, utopia, emancipazione* (2022).

[43] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, 9.

"eternal present future" descending on "all of humanity" alongside the growing supremacy of US capitalism within the world economy.[44]

In Foucault's assessment, the ordoliberal tradition hence retains a post-historic character as well, as it promotes an intrinsically "nonrevolutionary temporality".[45] The anti-revolutionary feature of the new German governmentality, as well as the political inertia which it fosters, closely parallel the subsequent rise of neoliberalism as the paradigm of globalization and the ideological structures it puts in place. To understand this parallel better, we first need to assess how Foucault defines the "permanent consensus" he hints at. On the one hand, this kind of consensus is *automatically* implied by the (free) participation in the market economy. This does not only concern legal recognition, which is nevertheless part of the picture since "adherence to this liberal system produces *permanent consensus* as a surplus product" (*The Birth of Biopolitics*, 85), while "the free market, the economically free market, binds and manifests political bonds":

> the economy does not only bring a juridical structure or legal legitimization to a German state that history had just debarred. This economic institution, the economic freedom that from the start it is the role of this institution to guarantee and maintain, produces something even more real, concrete, and immediate than a legal legitimization; *it produces a permanent consensus of all those who may appear as agents within these economic processes*, as investors, workers, employers, and trade unions (85).

The crucial point is whether the "permanent consensus" is revocable. Does the establishment of the Federal Republic imply a new, more subtle political tyranny in Germany? Foucault does not seem to argue for a full irrevocability of political consensus in *The Birth of Biopolitics*. First of all, (*i*) the permanent consensus is by Foucault's definition subordinated to unconstrained ("*free*") participation in the economic game. This seems to entail that, if some individuals or parties did not fully condone the new free market arrangements of the Federal Republic, even their daily out-of-necessity participation in the economy would necessarily entail political approval of the new order. In other words, if we focus on the "free" character of participation in the economic game, the out-of-necessity participation would not produce the "permanent consensus" from an ideal-theory perspective. Secondly, and arguably more importantly, (*ii*) Foucault ties the permanent consensus to "good governance": the state must continue to efficiently deliver good economic results and to assure economic growth (Ibid.). If individual pursuit of enrichment through the market is "the daily *sign* of the adherence of individuals to the state" (Ibid.), at the same time the state must make sure that the economy continues to manifest the "proper political signs that enable the structures, mechanisms, and justifications of power to function" (Ibid.), for example, a "strong Deutschmark, a satisfactory rate of growth, an expanding purchasing power, and a favourable balance of payments […]" (Ibid.).

[44] Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit* (1980), 161 (footnote 6). Cf. Alessandro Volpi, "Reich Der Freiheit o American Way of Life? Kojève e La Fine Della Storia," *Dianoia. Rivista Di Filosofia* 1:34 (2022), 113–28.

[45] Ricciardi, "Tempo, ordine e potere".

Therefore, conditions (i) and (ii) seem to potentially weaken the irrevocability of the "permanent consensus". Now, considering these, when arguing that Foucault's assessment of the ordoliberal mindset is appropriate not only to explain post-war Germany but also relevant elements of fin de siècle global neoliberalism, at least one objection stands in the way. One could contend that if Foucault's "permanent consensus" is to be an appropriate descriptive framework for neoliberal globalization, at least condition (*ii*) must fall. In the face of the 2007-2008 financial crash, austerity politics, and the global rise of inequalities (and all the connected bad economic "signs"),[46] we need to explain why the "permanent consensus" does not seem to have been revoked from neoliberal capitalism in the aftermath of those bad "signs" – in other words, why did we experience the "strange non-death" of neoliberal ideas and structures despite their declining popularity and popular approval?[47]

The "there is no alternative" (TINA) rhetoric was already in the air as Foucault started looking back to the origins of neoliberal thought,[48] but it was still far from being internationally hegemonic.[49] Therefore, although prescient, Foucault's assessment of the features of neoliberal capitalism could only be partial in the 1978-79 courses.

Nevertheless, despite conditions (i) and (ii) above, there are already several elements in the Foucauldian argument that could suggest a more radical understanding of the "permanent consensus" – as something that is not just easily revokable in case of forced participation in the market or bad "economic signs".

First, the fact that the consensus is *automatically* conferred to the legal and political framework from the very moment in which an actor enters the game of market competition needs to be developed beyond Foucault's en passant comments. Since the economic

---

[46] Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*; Davies, *The Limits;* Srnicek and Williams, *Inventing the Future*; Piketty, *Capital*. Chamayou, *The Ungovernable Society.*

[47] Crouch, *The Strange Non-death*.

[48] David Harvey, *A Brief History*, 1-2.

[49] In Foucault's words, "the problem the Germans had to resolve was […]: given a state that does not exist, how can we get it to exist on the basis of this non-state space of economic freedom?" (87). There are some significant similarities between the problem faced by the ordoliberals and the situation in which national statehood restructures itself in the face of the wave of liberal globalization starting in the 1980s and culminating in the 1990s. As Dani Rodrick summarised, states constantly face a "trilemma" in their political agendas: they struggle to pursue, at the same time, democracy, globalization, and national sovereignty, cf. Dani Rodrik, *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy* (2012). According to a wide literature on the neoliberal restructuring of the state (cf. Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (1996); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (2001); Hent Kalmo and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Sovereignty in Fragments: The Past, Present and Future of a Contested Concept* (2010); Wendy Brown, "Neo-Liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy," in *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics* (2005); Id., "American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and DeDemocratization," *Political Theory*, 34:6 (2006), 690-714; Id., *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (2017); Mitchell and Fazi, *Reclaiming the State: A Progressive Vision of Sovereignty for a Post-Neoliberal World* (2017)), fin-de-siecle globalization challenged states' traditional channels of legitimization, "disciplining" the states according to a neoliberal macroeconomic agenda which constrains their expense budgets, exposes the bond market to an unprecedented dependence on finance markets, and tends to identify in the economy the legitimizing principle for policy-making and executive decisions (cf. Davies, *Limits*). Considering especially this last element, the parallel with the post-war genesis of the state from the economy in Germany seems to be plausible.

genealogy of the state is, as we recalled, "permanent" (continuously renovated), and so outside any linear conception of history, the act of participation does not seem to be logically compatible with the sort of quality-check by macroeconomic indicators which (*ii*) implies. Consequently, since the very participation in the economic game "would imply that consent has been given to *any* decision which may be taken to guarantee this economic freedom or to secure that which makes this economic freedom possible" (83), the risk is that every decision *merely claiming* to point in this direction will *automatically* gain the consent of the economic agents. Consequently, in this light, Foucault's "permanent consensus" would imply that the very possibility of revocation has been destroyed and that the "double circuit" that was established between the economy and sovereignty remains *insulated* from further expression of consent. The permanent consensus would then necessarily entail the removal of the space of critique and, in so doing, the "liberal" character of neoliberal governmentality. Once neoliberal governmentality imposes itself, it does not matter how bad the indicators of economic performance might get or how many people lose their jobs in a financial crisis. The policy initiatives that are claimed to be taken to save free markets will not need to be accepted by the electorate to be legitimized: they will henceforth gain a supposedly *technical* nature.

Second, Foucault's assessment of the history of the SPD, the Socialist Democratic Party, reveals something decisive concerning a prefiguration of the TINA mindset's capture of the left. Despite having strongly opposed Erhard's program as early as 1948, the SPD slowly started accepting the new liberalizing political agenda and abandoning the general principles of classic socialism:

> In 1959, at the Bad Godesberg congress, German social democracy first renounced the principle of transition to the socialization of the means of production and […] recognized that not only was private ownership of the means of production perfectly legitimate, but that it had a right to state protection and encouragement. […] [T]he state's essential and basic tasks is to protect not only private property in general, but private property in the means of production, with the condition […] of compatibility with "an equitable social order." Finally, […] the congress approved the principle of a market economy, here again with the restriction, wherever "the conditions of genuine competition prevail" (89).

How could the SPD so quickly turn the page from socialism? "To enter into the political game of the new Germany", Foucault argues, "the SPD really had to convert to these neo-liberal theses […] to the general practice of this neo-liberalism as governmental practice" (90). As far back as 1963, the SPD even accepted the dogma that even light, flexible state planning was dangerous for a liberal economy (91). One reason for this shift, according to Foucault, is political strategy: the SPD could only have a role in the new German state by accepting its general assumptions on the state getting legitimization from the economy and not the contrary. One other reason is that a truly socialist governmentality never existed, and socialist agendas were always implemented in the discourses and practices of different governmentalities, in this case, a liberal one (92). However, what is important for our argument here is that Foucault sketches the SPD's transition from classic socialism

to neoliberalism as a "no-alternative" path.[50] How could a socialist party, which traditionally conceives a given legal and economic framework as preferable only *after* the state or popular consensus (presumed or expressed) has formed it, even think of accepting the new political system, in which the only legitimization for the state comes *from* the economy that exists *before* it? We could answer this by building on the Foucauldian analysis: the SPD might have already started experiencing the closure of the space of political imagination that the new ordoliberal governmentality and temporality had already established. If this hypothesis is correct, Foucault would have already foreseen that when a full real market-based governmentality is established, its governmental mechanisms begin excluding any reform of its grounding principles.

Foucault undoubtedly recognizes that a significant "shift" had happened between neoliberal governmentality and 18th and 19th century liberalism and classical economics (cf. 86, 130-1, 162, 220, 247). However, sometimes Foucault appears to continue to see neoliberalism in part as a variation of a wider liberal way of governing: "We are still dealing with a liberal type of governmentality" (86). The underdeveloped hints that we highlighted in the last section of this paper aim to suggest that Foucault was rather oscillating on neoliberalism's "liberal" character, partly foreseeing what contemporary critiques of neoliberal globalization pointed out as neoliberalism's anti-democratic, illiberal character.[51]

THE IRANIAN REPORTAGES AND "POLITICAL SPIRITUALITY"

This section argues that Foucault's remarks about the ordoliberal legitimatization mechanism – about the consensus it creates, the subjectivities it produces, and the temporality it presupposes – find their counterbalance in the Foucauldian writings on the Iranian uprising. A few months before the start of the course *The Birth of Biopolitics* at *Collège de France* (1978-1979), he published a series of reportages on behalf of an Italian newspaper (the "Corriere della Sera") on the events that would eventually lead to the Iranian revolution. Compared to his books and courses at the *Collège de France*, Foucault's writings on the uprisings against Shah Reza Pahlavi are particularly complex and less structured. Nevertheless, one can find a unique approach to what was at the core of Foucault's problematization at the time: the challenge of exposing the hidden contingency that power had disguised as inevitable and how to think of a different relationship between governors and governed.[52] In the following sections, we will demonstrate how the solution to this problem involves rethinking the relationship between politics and temporality. Beginning in the late 1970s, Michel Foucault became increasingly aware of the declining relevance of

---

[50] With the partial exception that a new, *socialist* governmentality must be invented for socialism to emancipate itself from liberal or strong-state governmentalities. Michel Foucault, *The Birth*, 94.

[51] For some references, cf. Crouch, *Post-democracy. Themes for the 21st Century* (2004); Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*; Brown, "Neo-Liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy"; Wolfgang Streeck, *Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism* (2017). Massimo de Carolis, *Il tramonto*; Chamayou, *The Ungovernable Society*.

[52] See, for example, the lecture given at the Sorbonne in 1978: Michel Foucault, "What is Critique?" [1978], in *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (1996), 382-398.

political practices traditionally associated with the Left. He began to diagnose the waning of any substantial drive toward emancipation in the world around him. This ongoing de-politicization was evident to him, and his course titled *The Birth of Biopolitics* serves as clear evidence. While his disillusionment during this period partly explains his enthusiasm for the Iranian events, Foucault's frequent references to a new interpretation of temporality in those reportages underscored his belief that the exploration of original political practices required a renewed relationship with our way of perceiving temporality. As a result, while these reports predate *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Michel Foucault's writings on Iran can be viewed as evidence of a different approach to governmental practices, providing an alternative strategy for *becoming ungovernable*.

As we recalled, in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault linked ordo- and neoliberalism to a structural and apolitical acceptance of the existing situation. However, he had already denounced this condition in a 1977 interview, in which he lamented the loss of the horizon of concrete political practice and called for the development of a new way of conceiving political action after the crisis of socialist countries all over the world:

> [Today] c'est la première fois qu'il n'y a plus sur la terre un seul point d'où pourrait jaillir la lumière d'une espérance […] ; il nous faut tout recommencer depuis le début et nous demander à partir de quoi on peut faire la critique de notre société […]; en un mot, l'importante tradition du socialisme est à remettre fondamentalement en question, car tout ce que cette tradition socialiste a produit dans l'histoire est à condamner.[53]

At the end of the 1970s, Foucault diagnosed the disappearance or, rather, the inoperability of a certain way of understanding political action and its goals, thus affirming the necessity to rethink it from the ground up. In this regard, the peculiar configuration of the Iranian uprising provided him with the example of an original political praxis that was incomparable to the forms that had previously guided protest movements.

Nevertheless, Foucault's dissatisfaction with the principles that had guided the policies of real socialism and, more broadly, his pessimism about the geopolitical situation of the world can still be found in what is probably[54] his first writing on the Iranian Revolution: in the archives of the *Fonds Michel Foucault*, there is an unpublished typewritten sheet in

[53] "[Today] for the first time there is not a single point on earth from which the light of hope can shine [...]; we have to start all over again from the beginning and ask ourselves what is the basis for a critique of our society [...]; in short, the important tradition of socialism is to be fundamentally called into question because everything that this socialist tradition has produced in history is to be condemned" (our translation) – Michel Foucault, "La torture, c'est la raison" [1977], in *Dits et écrits II*, 397-398.

[54] The typescript article is not dated. However, it is possible to suspect that it is his first piece of writing concerning the Iranian Revolution for two reasons: on the one hand, in the body of the text he refers to the Black Friday massacre (7 September 1978) as a recent event, thereby indicating that the composition of this article likely took place in September or October 1978; on the other hand, not only are the themes completely heterogeneous to those in the rest of the corpus, but in some places the theses put forward are the exact opposite to those advocated in published texts and interviews. If this were indeed his first draft of the reports from Iran, then this would testify to an extraordinary turn in his analysis which took place in contact with the concrete practices and discourses of the insurgents – cf. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Fonds Michel Foucault*, box 50, folder 15.

which the author analyses the geopolitical situation in Iran by referring it to the broader context of the Cold War. Further on, Foucault describes the lack of intermediary bodies that could act as representatives of civil society and the distrust that particularly affected the Tudeh, Iran's communist party. At the end of this short unpublished article, Foucault raises the question of whether this absence of intermediaries between state and society – what he calls *politics* – could be the very reason why the Iranian people defied the "machine guns and tanks" of their regime. However, the article ends on a bitter note: "L'expérience, l'échec et la trajectoire de plusieurs groupes de guerillas au cours des dix dernières années montreraient, et tragiquement, combien il serait faux de raisonner ainsi".[55]

The disenchantment that emerges from this unpublished article is in complete contrast with the tone that Foucault would take in his articles for the "Corriere della Sera". Foucault's two journeys to Iran led him to revise his initial positions, observing in those events the emergence of original subjectivities and practices. The radical nature of this shift is demonstrated precisely by the issue of the relationship between politics and society. Whereas in the above passage the absence of politics figures as a reason for the failure of the revolt, in the published writings something Foucault calls "strike in relation to politics" emerges as one of the determining factors of its success: politics understood as party politics and consensus-building had no place among the insurgents, who found in the unity of the whole society the most effective way to continue the revolt.[56] The Iranian uprising is therefore not reducible to the revolutionary dynamic as conceived by classical Marxism because it is about a whole people and their general will against the Shah and his government, not a clash of classes.[57] Secondly, "strike in relation to politics" also implies the requirement for the people striking to avoid imposing practical political solutions, for example, on the future constitution, social issues, or foreign policy.[58] Foucault states that what the insurgents were asking for when they called for an Islamic government was not a concrete political form but the demand for a new world: for a new relationship with politics that passes through a new relationship with the self.[59]

This is the essence of what Foucault called "political spirituality", arguably the most famous (and misunderstood) expression in the Iranian reportages. The concept of "political spirituality" has been interpreted as affirming the necessity of religion or any other fanatical belief as a starting point for political action.[60] However, with that expression, we should rather indicate a double movement that connects, on the one hand, political praxis – as the attempt to intervene in the world in order to bring radical changes; and, on the other hand, the parallel change affecting subjectivity – which precisely within praxis

---

[55] "The experience, the failure, and the trajectory of several guerrilla groups over the last ten years would tragically show how wrong it would be to reason in this way", ibid. (Our translation).

[56] Michel Foucault, "A Revolt with Bare Hands," in *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, eds. Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson (2005), 212.

[57] Michel Foucault, "Iran: The Spirit of a World without Spirit" [1979], ibid, 253-254.

[58] Foucault, "A Revolt with Bare Hands," 212.

[59] Foucault, "Iran: The Spirit of a World," 255.

[60] As examples we could mention: Claude Roy, "Les débordements du divin," *Le Monde* 16 July 1979; Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 30; James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (1993); Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Foucault in Iran. Islamic Revolution after the Enlightenment* (2016), 63-67.

engages a process of subjectivation.[61] Foucault – largely influenced by Massignon and Corbin, but also by Ali Shariati[62] – certainly recognized that Shiite Islam could be a driving force for an emancipatory political fight, and in his reportages, he stresses the active role those religious beliefs had on the Iranian uprisers.[63] Nevertheless, this should not lead to identifying political spirituality with religiosity. This aspect becomes evident in an interview with Duccio Trombadori in 1978, where Foucault recounts his own involvement as a political activist during the March 1968 uprisings in Tunisia, which took place while he was teaching there. Referring to those revolts, Foucault stated that

> For those young people, Marxism didn't just represent a better way of analysing reality: at the same time, it was a kind of moral energy, a kind of existential act that was quite remarkable […]. That was what I saw in Tunisia, the evidence of the necessity of myth, of a spirituality, the unbearable quality of certain situations produced by capitalism, colonialism, and neocolonialism.[64]

Hence, what matters is not a particular theological content but rather the influence that discourses can wield over subjectivity, thereby driving it to act in the world through self-transformation. Foucault's "political spirituality" can henceforth be described as a tidal movement; a series of cross-returns between action in the world and the effect it has on subjectivity, which, precisely through their modification, find the propulsion to continue political action.[65] In Iran, Foucault observes an entire people animated by this political spirituality; an authentic "collective subjectivation".[66] Religion can thus be either the "opium of the people" or a strong basis for action in the world on the condition that it succeeds in producing a political spirituality – opening the political imaginary and adapting it to developments in praxis "on the ground".[67]

A NEW POLITICAL TEMPORALITY

Foucault's depiction of political spirituality reveals a clear influence from Ernst Bloch's book *The Principle of Hope*[68] on the Iranian reportage. In an interview with Farès Sassine in 1979, Foucault himself acknowledges his indebtedness to the German philosopher, stating that Bloch's work is significant for its exploration of a particular approach to understanding history that involves "perceiving another world here below, perceiving that the reality of things is not definitively established and set in place, but instead, in the very midst of

[61] Michel Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978" [1980], in *Dits et Écrits II*, 849.
[62] Christian Jambet, "Retour sur l'insurrection iranienne," *L'Herne – Michel Foucault*, ed. Philippe Artières, Jean-François Bert, Frédéric Gros and Judith Revel (2011), 374.
[63] Michel Foucault, "A Powder Keg Called Islam" [1979], in *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 241.
[64] Michel Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault" [1980], in *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion (2000), 279-280.
[65] Michel Foucault, "Table ronde du 20 mai 1978," 849.
[66] Orazio Irrera, "Michel Foucault – Une généalogie de la subjectivité militante," *Chimères* 83 (2014), 41.
[67] Eric Aeschimann, "Michel Foucault, l'Iran et le pouvoir du spirituel: L'entretien inédit de 1979," *BibliObs* 7 February 2018; Julien Cavagnis, "Michel Foucault et le soulèvement iranien de 1978 : retour sur la notion de 'spiritualité politique'," *Cahiers Philosophiques* 130 (2012), 66-67.
[68] Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* [1954] (1986).

our time and our history, there can be an opening, a point of light drawing us towards it that gives us access, from this world itself, to a better world".[69] This, then, is the first issue emerging from the Iranian reportages: against the temptation to present our world as necessary, we rather need to reactivate a utopian thought that entails our very subjectivity. By calling Bloch into use, we ultimately delve into the heart of our argument: the questioning of the intricate connection between our perception of time and our political actions. This directs our attention to an analysis of Foucault's specific philosophy of history in the context of his Iranian reportages. In these works, Foucault challenges the perspective that considers the Iranian Revolution as a mere reaction to the inevitable march of modernization, whether it be in a liberal or socialist vein. Given the bipolar geopolitical situation of the Cold War, there was an ongoing conflict for hegemony over many developing countries; a conflict whose purpose was to determine the instance that would finally bring them forward from their "backwardness". It was a matter of defining whether the fulfilment of this "historical necessity" would be resolved in the capitalist and democratic order of the "West" or whether it would instead come about through the advent of a still very "Western" socialist revolution.[70] The denunciation of this "Westernizing" bias is particularly articulated in Foucault's critique of the concept of revolution, as understood in the Marxist tradition, to frame the Iranian events theoretically. According to Foucault, Iranian uprisings were not a socialist revolution disguised through religious phraseology. Foucault sees something different emerging in Iran: an idea of a social constitution independent of the two pre-existing ideological blocs and, more generally, an alternative to the very concept of modernity that the two blocs shared.[71]

We have previously demonstrated Foucault's rejection of the class-based nature of the Iranian uprising. Nevertheless, as the aforementioned interview with Duccio Trombadori shows, Foucault did not reject Marxism per se but rather its dogmatic use. Foucault at that time blamed the Marxism of his era as a cause of the "impoverishment" of the ability to understand the present:

> En matière d'imagination politique, il faut reconnaître que nous vivons dans un monde très pauvre. Quand on cherche d'où vient cette pauvreté d'imagination sur le plan socio-politique du XXe siècle, il me semble, malgré tout, que le marxisme joue un rôle important.[72]

[69] Michel Foucault, "There Can't Be Societies without Uprisings. Michel Foucault and Farès Sassine" [1979], in *Foucault and the Making of Subjects*, ed. Laura Cremonesi, Orazio Irrera, Daniele Lorenzini and Martina Tazzioli (2016), 25-26.

[70] Michel Foucault, "The Mythical Leader of the Iranian Revolt" [1978], in *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 220-222.

[71] Ibid, 222-223.

[72] "When it comes to political imagination, we must admit that we live in a very impoverished world. When we look at the origins of this poverty of imagination in the socio-political sphere of the 20th century, it seems to me that, all things considered, Marxism plays an important role" (our translation), Michel Foucault, "Méthodologie pour la connaissance du monde: comment se débarrasser du marxisme" [1978], in *Dits et écrits II*, 599. See also Gordon Hull, "How Foucault Got Rid of (Bossy) Marxism," *Critical Review* 34:3-4 (2022), 372-403.

In this regard, the clearest point of divergence with the Marxist tradition concerns the perception of temporality. Classical Marxist[73] temporality, as per Foucault, was informed by a processual movement unfolding in time according to a chain of causes and effects, with political praxis triggering at the end point of this evolution.[74] Foucault instead sees the Iranian events as something quite different. Following François Furet, a historian of the French Revolution, Foucault points out that even the worst economic conditions do not explain the movement by which a subjectivity is ready to put its life at risk for political purposes.[75] On the one hand, this is a clear rejection of the theory of class struggle, of dialectical materialism; on the other, it is a rejection of materialism itself and of the different economistic or evolutionistic ways of explaining historical events. Through a process-oriented approach, Marxist-inspired historiography caused the disappearance of the 'event' from history: every event is then explicable through the appeal to the material situation of a given historical moment. Foucault aims to expose the insufficiency of this classical Marxist explanatory frame. To him, the Iranian events were proof of the urgent need of reinserting the event into the fabric of history and of assessing what leads a people to revolt in a given situation.[76] A crucial point is, in his view, the focus on the subjective experience of the insurgents, beyond the material conditions of life – that is, aiming exactly at what is irreducible and inexplicable about the Iranian uprising. For this reason, Foucault prefers the term "revolt" instead of "revolution", which is overly compromised with the classical Marxist tradition and its temporality.[77] Through the distinction between revolt and revolution, Foucault sets up a different way of understanding the relationship between temporality and political praxis. The two elements are not accidentally bound together: instead, they are naturally connected in a consequential way. The temporality of revolution promotes an understanding of history as something that can be examined as the result of necessary conditions. Therefore, history turns into the product of a

[73] It appears that Foucault is only addressing a mechanical, deterministic version of orthodox Western Marxism. However, as Ernst Bloch and other thinkers such as Walter Benjamin show, there are variants of Marxism that take a less deterministic view of the relationship between historical development and political action. Overall, it seems like Foucault attempted to distance himself from Marx's philosophy in these reportages. This might have resulted from the influence the *Nouveaux Philosophes*, ferocious opponents of the PCF and the Soviet Union, had on the French cultural milieu at the time. However, it is important to emphasize that the link between Foucault and Marx is not as straightforward as these reports suggest. Notably, (1) the aforementioned interview regarding the 1968 Tunisian uprising demonstrates that, in Foucault's opinion, Marxism still has the potential to be applied productively, and (2) on various occasions Foucault openly acknowledges the positive impact that Marx's writings had on him – cf. Michel Foucault, "Entretien sur la prison: le livre et sa méthode" [1975], in *Dits et écrits I*, 1620-1621; Id., "Structuralisme et poststructuralisme" [1983], in *Dits et écrits II*, 1276. Regarding Foucault's "heretic" Marxism, with a focus on his account of temporality, see also Judith Revel, "Foucault, marxiste hérétique? Histoire, subjectivation et liberté," in *Marx & Foucault. Lectures, usages, confrontations,* eds. C. Laval, L. Paltrinieri and F. Taylan (2015), 154-172. See Jacques Bidet, *Foucault with Marx* (2016); Antonio Negri, *Marx and Foucault* (2017); and Sandro Chignola, *Foucault's Politics of Philosophy* (2019), 26–67, for more in-depth analyses of the relationship between Foucault and Marx.
[74] Ernest Mandel, *From Class Society to Communism: An Introduction to Marxism* (1977), 177-179.
[75] François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (1981); Michel Foucault, "Iran: The Spirit of a World without Spirit" [1979], 252.
[76] Michel Foucault, "There Can't Be Societies without Uprisings", 36.
[77] Michel Foucault, "Is it Useless to Revolt?" [1979], in *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 264.

consequential projection of the past into the present. Revolution presupposes, therefore, a 'knowable' time which determines the *Kairos*, the right moment for political action. The temporality implied by revolt, on the contrary, breaks through the causal networks of revolutionary history, causing a rupture which is irreducible to any materialistic-economic condition of possibility. This is why the Iranian revolt will ultimately remain inexplicable in terms of its material causes: it implies the irruption of an otherworldly political dream within our mundane temporality, and therefore it remains constitutively inexplicable through causal relations.[78] In short, Foucault's assessment of the practical problem of the gap separating revolt and revolution flows into the broader problem of the status and role of political actors. His writings on Iran constitute an analysis of the possibility for a subjectivity to act in the fabric of history, and it is asserted that the ability to take meaningful action in the present relies on embracing an alternative approach to perceiving time. This approach refuses to grant absolute authority to the demands imposed by the present moment and instead encourages scrutiny of one's actuality in the quest for potential avenues of escape.

Foucault is not the only philosopher of the French Left who, in that historical period, had a critical attitude toward classical Marxism and socialist countries. This approach was certainly shared by that group of intellectuals who were gaining more and more space in the political scene precisely at that time, the *nouveaux philosophes*.[79] Among them, the author to whom he felt closest was certainly Maurice Clavel.[80] On Clavel's death in 1979, Foucault wrote a short note in "Le Monde" to honor his friend. In this text, the importance of temporality is affirmed with the greatest decision, and, in particular, of "vivre autrement le temps" (to live time differently). This is the sense of freedom that Foucault finds in Clavel's work: it is not a matter of a "total" philosophical approach that affixes the seal of necessity to reality but of "the inevitable event which rips everything";[81] the irresistible irruption of transcendence that allows us to break out of the deterministic materialism of causal networks. Here the closeness between Clavel's thought and the fundamental conceptual nodes of the Iranian reportages becomes even more evident. Foucault argues that Clavel's concept of a transcendent "Grace" corresponds to the immanent concept of "Revolt". This is again described in antithesis to the concept of revolution:

> Revolution is organized according to an entire economy of time: conditions, promises, necessities; it thus lodges in history, makes its bed there and finally lies down. The revolt, cutting through time, raises the men to the vertical of their earth and their humanity.[82]

According to Foucault, this is the fundamental ethical-political legacy of Clavel's thought: to live time otherwise, detaching oneself from the continuity with the past, imposed as

---

[78] Ibid, 263; Laura Cremonesi, Orazio Irrera, Daniele Lorenzini and Martina Tazzioli, "Foucault, the Iranian Uprising and the Constitution of a Collective Subjectivity," in *Foucault and the Making of Subjects,* 13-14.
[79] Michael S. Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left. The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (1994), 184-185.
[80] Ibid, 194.
[81] Michel Foucault, "Vivre autrement le temps" [1979], in *Dits et écrits II*, 789 (Our translation).
[82] Ibid, 790.

necessary. This imposition would be nothing but a limitation to an authentic political renewal. This will have to result in the re-proposition of the centrality of transcendence within the political debate, even understood in a sense that is not immediately religious.[83] What is required from politics is not the mere satisfaction of certain material needs nor the suppression of certain contradictions in the social body. Instead, politics needs to be the anchor point of a spiritual renewal concerning man in the totality of his existence, individual and collective – an opportunity to live our time differently.

CONCLUSION[84]

This paper reviewed some of the most relevant loci in Michel Foucault's production discussing the intertwining of temporality, politics, and subjectivation processes. The analysis of Foucault's assessment of ordoliberal temporality in post-war Germany illuminates the connection between neoliberal market-based and "ahistorical" temporality with depoliticization, permanent consensus, state sovereignty, and liberalism. Furthermore, through a review of the Iranian reportages, this article provided an example of active resistance to governmental practices which directly involves temporality – drawing on the idea that political action needs to be kickstarted by a constitution of subjectivity that involves a non-processual conception of historical evolution. Lastly, reviewing the eulogy to Clavel, the article has shown how for Foucault the notion of "revolt" had acquired, in those years, a meta-historical value, both ethical and political – an appeal to live time differently and, more generally, to examine our perception of temporality for political change.

References

Aeschimann, Eric, "Michel Foucault, l'Iran et le pouvoir du spirituel: L'entretien inédit de 1979," *BibliObs*, 7 February, 2018.

Afary, Janet, and Kevin B. Anderson, eds., *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Baschet, Jérôme, *Défaire la tyrannie du présent*. Paris: La Découverte, 2018.

Baudrillard, Jean, *The Illusion of the End*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.

Becchio, Giandomenica, and Giovanni Leghissa, *The Origins of Neoliberalism. Insights from Economics and Philosophy*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Benhabib, Seyla, "Democracy and Difference: Reflections on the Metapolitics of Lyotard and Derrida," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 2:1 (1994), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.1994.tb00013.x

Berardi, Franco, "Bifo," in *After the Future*, eds. G. Genosko and N. Thoburn. Oakland, CA and Edinburgh: A K Pr Distribution, 2011.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Each author contributed equally to this work. Sections 2 and 3 were developed by Alessandro Volpi, and sections 4 and 5 were developed by Alessio Porrino.

Berardi, Franco "Bifo," *Futurability: The Age of Impotence and the Horizon of Possibility*. London and New York: Verso Books, 2019.

Berman, Marshall, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* [1982]. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010.

Bidet, Jacques, *Foucault with Marx*. London: Zed Books, 2016.

Binkley, Sam, "The Work of Neoliberal Governmentality: Temporality and Ethical Substance in the Tale of Two Dads," *Foucault Studies* 6 (2008), 60-8.

Bloch, Ernst, *A Philosophy of the Future* [1963], ed. J. Cumming. Freiburg: Herder and Herder, 1970.

Bloch, Ernst, *The Principle of Hope* [1954], trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1986.

Bloch, Ernst, *Heritage of Our Times*. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1990.

Bonefeld, Werner, "Freedom and the Strong State: On German Ordoliberalism," *New Political Economy* 17:5 (2012), 633–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2012.656082

Boukalas, Christos, "No future: pre-emption, temporal sovereignty and hegemonic implosion: A study on the end of neoliberal time," *Constellations* 28:2 (2021), 252-268. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12469

Braun, Kathrin, "Biopolitics and Temporality in Arendt and Foucault," *Time & Society* 16:1 (2007), 5-23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X07074099.

Brown, Wendy, "Neo-Liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy," in *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Brown, Wendy, "American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and DeDemocratization," *Political Theory* 34:6 (2006), 690-714. https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591706293016

Brown, Wendy, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. Princeton: Zone Books, 2017.

Cahill, Damiel, Melinda Cooper, Martijn Konings and David Primrose, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Neoliberalism*. London: Sage, 2018.

Cavagnis, Julien, "Michel Foucault et le soulèvement iranien de 1978 : retour sur la notion de 'spiritualité politique'," *Cahiers Philosophiques* 130:3 (2012), 51-71. https://doi.org/10.3917/caph.130.0051

Cerny, Philip G., "In the Shadow of Ordoliberalism," *European Review of International Studies* 3:1 (2016), 78-92.

Chamayou, Grégoire, *The Ungovernable Society: A Genealogy of Authoritarian Liberalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021.

Chignola, Sandro, *Foucault's Politics of Philosophy. Power, Law and Subjectivity*, trans. Valeria Venditti. Abingdon: Routledge, 2019.

Christofferson, Michael S., *French Intellectuals Against the Left. The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004.

Cremonesi, Laura, Orazio Irrera, Daniele Lorenzini and Tazzioli, Martina, eds., *Foucault and the Making of Subjects*. London and New York: Rowman Littlefield, 2016.

Crouch, Colin, *Post-Democracy. Themes for the 21st Century*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2004.

Crouch, Colin, *The Strange Non-death of Neo-liberalism*. Cambridge: Polity, 2011.

Dardot, Pierre, and Christian Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society*, trans. Gregory Elliott. London and New York: Verso, 2017.

Davies, William, *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty and the Logic of Competition*. Los Angeles and London: SAGE, 2016.

De Carolis, Massimo, *Il rovescio della libertà. Tramonto del neoliberalismo e disagio della civiltà*. Macerata: Quodlibet, 2017.

Debord, Guy, *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit, Mich: Black & Red, 1984.

Di Chio, Sabino, *Tempo Irreale. Il Restringimento Dell'orizzonte Temporale della tarda Modernita.* Napoli: Liguori, 2015.

Eagleton, Terry, "The Contradictions of Postmodernism," *New Literary History* 28:1 (1996), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.1997.0007

Fisher, Mark, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*. Winchester, UK and Washington, USA: Zero Books, 2009.

Foucault, Michel, *Dits et Écrits. 1954-1988*, vol. II. Paris: Gallimard, 2001, n. ed. 2017.

Foucault, Michel, *Power. Essentials Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley. New York: The New Press, 2000.

Foucault, Michel, *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Foucault, Michel, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College De France, 1977–78*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Foucault, Michel, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1978–79*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and the Last Man* [1992]. New York, NY: Free Press, 2006.

Furet, François, *Interpreting the French Revolution* [1978], trans. Elborg Forster. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Ghamari-Tabrizi, Behrooz, *Foucault in Iran. Islamic Revolution after the Enlightenment*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

Grimm, Dieter, *Sovereignty: The Origin and Future of a Political and Legal Concept*, trans. Belinda Sooper. New York: Columbia Scholarship Online, 2015.

Gurvitch, Georges, *The Spectrum of Social Time*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1963. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-3623-8

Habermas, Jürgen, *Der Philosophische Diskurs der Moderne.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985.

Hardt, Michael, and Negri, Antonio, *Empire*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Hartog, François, *Presentism and Experiences of Time. Regimes of Historicity* [2003], trans. Saskia Brown. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

Harvey, David, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199283262.002.0002

Harvey, David, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991.

Hull, Gordon, "How Foucault Got Rid of (Bossy) Marxism," *Critical Review* 34:3-4 (2022), 372-403. https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2022.2121516

Irrera, Orazio, "Michel Foucault – Une généalogie de la subjectivité militante," *Chimères* 83 (2014), 35-45. https://doi.org/10.3917/chime.083.0035

Jambet, Christian, "Retour sur l'insurrection iranienne," in *Michel Foucault*, eds. Philippe Artières, Jean-François Bert, Frédéric Gros and Judith Revel, 372-376. Paris: L'Herne, 2011.

Jameson, Fredric, *Postmodernism: or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso Books, 1992.

Jameson, Fredric, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Jameson, Fredric, *The Seeds of Time*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Kalmo, Hent, and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Sovereignty in Fragments: The Past, Present and Future of a Contested Concept*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Klein, Naomi, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2007.

Klein, Naomi, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. New York NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

Kojève, Alexandre, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit* [1958]. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980.

Koselleck, Reinhardt, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* [1979], trans. Keith Tribe. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Lazzarato, Maurizio, *Il governo dell'uomo indebitato. Saggio sulla condizione neoliberista*. Bologna: DeriveApprodi, 2013.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude, "Histoire et ethnologie," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 38:6 (1983), 1217-1231. https://doi.org/10.3406/ahess.1983.411017

Lévi-Strauss, Claude, "The Scope of Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 7:2 (1966), 112-123. https://doi.org/10.1086/200687

Lilja, Mona, "The politics of time and temporality in Foucault's theorisation of resistance: ruptures, time-lags and decelerations," *Journal of Political Power* 11:3 (2018), 419-432. https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2018.1523319

Lyotard, Jean-Francois, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* [1979], trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, ed. Fredric Jameson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Mandel, Ernest, *From class society to Communism: An introduction to Marxism*, trans. Louisa Sadler. London: Inks Links, 1977.

Mierzejewski, Alfred C., “1957: Ludwig Erhard's Annus Terribilis,” *Essays in Economic and Business History* 22 (2004), 17-27.

Miller, James, *The Passion of Michel Foucault.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.

Mirowski, Philip, and Dieter Plehwe, eds., *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: the Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Mitchell, William, and Thomas Fazi, *Reclaiming the State: A Progressive Vision of Sovereignty for a Post-Neoliberal World*. London: Pluto Press, 2017.

Munn, Nancy D., “The Cultural Anthropology of Time: A Critical Essay,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21 (1992), 93–123.

Negri, Antonio, *Marx and Foucault*, trans. Ed Emery. Cambridge: Polity, 2017.

Niethammer, Lutz, *Posthistoire. Has History Come to an End?*. New York: Verso, 1992.

Oksala, Johanna, “Neoliberal Subjectivation: Between Foucault and Marx,” *Critical Inquiry* 49:4 (2023), 581–604. https://doi.org/10.1086/725022

Peck, Jamie, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; online edn, Oxford Academic, 1 Jan. 2011, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199580576.001.0001

Piketty, Thomas, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2017.

Porrino, Alessio, and Alessandro Volpi, “L’orologio e il calendario: Simbologia politica del tempo a partire da Walter Benjamin,” *Materiali di Estetica. Terza serie* 8:2 (2021). https://doi.org/10.54103/mde.i8.2.16983.

Portschy, Jürgen, “Times of power, knowledge and critique in the work of Foucault,” *Time & Society* 29:2 (2020), 392-419. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X20911786.

Reese-Schäfer, Walter, “Michel Foucaults Interpretation des Ordoliberalismus in seinen Vorlesungen zur Gouvernementalität“, in *Ideengeschichte als Provokation*, 197–216. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-04840-0_17

Revel, Judith, *Foucault avec Merleau-Ponty. Ontologie politique, présentisme et histoire.* Paris: Vrin, 2015.

Revel, Judith, “Foucault, marxiste hérétique? Histoire, subjectivation et liberté,” in *Marx & Foucault. Lectures, usages, confrontations,* eds. C. Laval, L. Paltrinieri and F. Taylan, 154-172. Paris: La Découverte, 2015.

Ricciardi, Maurizio, “Tempo, ordine, potere. Su alcuni presupposti concettuali del programma neoliberale,” *Scienza & Politica. Per una storia delle dottrine* 29:57 (2017). https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1825-9618/7551

Ricciardi, Maurizio, “L’Eterna Attualità dell’Ideologia tra Individuo, Storia e Società,” in *Storia d’Europa e del Mediterraneo. Dal Medioevo all’Età della globalizzazione*, *VI. L’età Contemporranea*, volume XIV, ed. G. Corni, 717 – 747. Roma: Salerno editrice, 2017.

Rodrik, Dani, *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2012.

Rosa, Hartmut, and William E. Scheuermann, *High Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power, And Modernity*. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2009.

Roy, Claude, "Les débordements du divin," *Le Monde* 16 July 1979.

Sassen, Saskia, *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Schmidt, James, ed., *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Shapiro, Stephen, "Foucault, Neoliberalism, Algorithmic Governmentality, and the Loss of Liberal Culture," in *Neoliberalism and Contemporary American Literature*, eds. Liam Kennedy and Stephen Shapiro. Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2019.

Šporer, David, "Contrast and History – Michel Foucault and Neoliberalism," *Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta u Splitu* 15 (2022), 87-100. https://doi.org/10.38003/zrffs.15.5

Srnicek, Nick, and Alex Williams, *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work*. London and New York: Verso Books, 2016.

Streeck, Wolfgang, *Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism*, trans. Patrick Camiller and David Fernbach, Second edition with a new preface. London and New York: Verso, 2017.

Trindade da Silva, Lucas, "Gênese da intelectualidade neoliberal segundo Michel Foucault," *Revista Pós Ciências Sociais* 16:31 (2019), 181–207. https://doi.org/10.18764/2236-9473.v16n31p181-207

Vogelmann, Frieder, "Ordoliberalism as Political Rationality in Foucault's Genealogy of Liberalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ordoliberalism*, eds. Thomas Biebricher, Peter Nedergaard, and Werner Bonefeld. (2022; online edn, Oxford Academic, 20 Oct. 2022), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198861201.013.37 (accessed February 2, 2024)

Volpi, Alessandro, ed., *Storia, Utopia, Emancipazione*. Firenze: Mimesis Edizioni, 2022.

Volpi, Alessandro, "Reich Der Freiheit o American Way of Life? Kojève e La Fine Della Storia", *Dianoia. Rivista Di Filosofia* 1:34 (2022), 113–28. https://doi.org/10.53148/DI202234007

Virilio, Paul, *Polar Inertia*. London and Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1999.

Wolin, Richard, *The Seduction of Unreason. The Intellectual Romance with Fascism from Nietzsche to Postmodernism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Young, Brigitte, "Contemporary Anglo-Saxon Neoliberalism is not German Ordoliberalism," in *The SAGE Handbook of Neoliberalism*, eds. Damien Cahill et al., 179-189. London: SAGE, 2018.

Žižek, Slavoj, *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism*. London: Penguin, 2015.

Author info
Alessandro Volpi
a.volpi@studenti.unisr.it
Ph.D. student in Political Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
Vita-Salute San Raffaele University
Italy

Alessio Porrino
aporrino@unisa.it
Ph.D. student in History of Political Institutions
Department of Political Science
University of Salerno
Italy

Alessandro Volpi is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Philosophy at University Vita-Salute San Raffaele. His research interests comprise neoliberal studies, philosophy of history and temporality, and climate politics. His current PhD project deals with the relationship between climate change and state sovereignty.

Alessio Porrino is a Ph.D. candidate in Theories and History of Political Institutions at the University of Salerno, Italy. He focuses on contemporary political philosophy in the French-speaking world. His research project is aimed at investigating the role of violence in Michel Foucault's thought.