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Samuel Lindholm

Jean Bodin and Biopolitics



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND
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ABSTRACT

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While the number of studies on biopolitics, the literal power over life (*bios*), continues to grow, some parts of Michel Foucault's original analysis have remained virtually unchallenged. For example, only a few thinkers have managed to contest his claim of biopolitics as an exclusively modern phenomenon. This current study aims to take part in the ongoing discussions concerning the history of biopolitics and the connection between life-optimizing biopolitics and the technology of sovereign power, which either disregards life or negates it altogether. We approach these topics by analyzing Jean Bodin's political thought, which acts as a prime example of early modern biopolitics. What makes Bodin's political works especially interesting is the fact that they appear to exemplify both sovereign power and biopolitics. We examine these issues by combining Foucauldian genealogy with political theory and intellectual history.

Bodin is a "populationist" who believes that the high number of citizens ought to be considered as the greatest wealth and strength of a commonwealth. The Angevin author is also interested in controlling the quality of the people with a magistracy of censors that purges undesirable individuals out of the commonwealth. Furthermore, he adopts other ancient and medieval ideas, such as those on climates, humors, and temperaments, which he believes hold considerable political weight. Bodin, who writes at the peak of the European witch hunts, maintains that sorcerers and sorceresses were behind many deaths, abortions, and even the fall of states. This problem includes a (bio)political element; purging the witches equates to safeguarding the people, the commonwealth, and the whole of humankind.

Establishing a biopolitical reading of Bodin's texts allows us to take part in two additional discussions concerning the notion of biopolitics. Firstly, we assert that Giorgio Agamben's equation of sovereign power and biopolitics is invalid. Bodin's political thought proves that the two technologies can co-exist while maintaining their conceptual distinction. Secondly, we argue that Foucault is mistaken to presume that biopolitics is an explicitly modern occurrence. We argue that Bodin acts as a prime example of what could be described as biopolitics before the "biopolitical era" of modernity as defined by Foucault.

Keywords: Jean Bodin, Michel Foucault, biopolitics, biopower, governmentality, sovereign power, population, state racism

TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

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Vaikka biopolitiikkaa eli elämää (*bios*) hallinnoivaa valtaa koskevien tutkimusten määrä kasvaa edelleen, eräät Michel Foucault'n alkuperäisen analyysin osatekijöistä ovat saaneet jatkaa voittokulkuaan ilman merkittäviä haasteita – vain muutamat ajattelijat ovat pyrkineet kiistämään hänen näkemyksensä biopolitiikasta yksinomaan modernina ilmiönä. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on ottaa osaa keskusteluihin biopolitiikan historiasta ja suhteesta, joka vallitsee elämää optimoivan biovallan ja elämää kohtaan välinpitämättömästi tai negatiivisesti suhtautuvan suvereenin vallan välillä. Lähestyn näitä teemoja tutkimalla Jean Bodinin poliittista ajattelua, joka toimii malliesimerkkinä varhaismodernista biopolitiikasta. Bodinin ajattelu on erityisen kiinnostava tutkimuskohde siksi, että se näyttäisi sisältävän esimerkkejä sekä suvereenista vallasta että biopolitiikasta. Tutkin näitä kysymyksiä yhdistelemällä foucault'laista genealogiaa politiikan teoriaan ja aatehistoriaan.

Bodin on "populationisti" eli ajattelija, joka ymmärtää ihmisten suuren määrän valtion merkittävimpänä rikkautena ja voimavarana. Hän on lisäksi kiinnostunut mahdollisuudesta palauttaa muinainen kensorivirasto, jonka tehtävä olisi puhdistaa yhteisö epätoivotuista yksilöistä. Bodin hyödyntää ajattelussaan myös muita antiikista ja keskiajalta tuttuja ajatuksia, joista tärkeimmät koskevat ilmastoja, ruumiinnesteitä ja temperamentteja. Hän uskoo näillä ajatuksilla olevan huomattavan paljon poliittista painoarvoa. Bodin, joka vaikutti Euroopan noitavainojen kärjistymän alkuvaiheessa, esitti, että noidat olivat syypäitä murhiin, abortteihin ja valtioiden kaatumiseen. Ongelma sisältää (bio)poliittisen elementin, sillä sen ratkaiseminen tarkoittaa ihmisten, valtion ja koko ihmiskunnan suojelemista.

Biopoliittinen luenta Bodinin teoksista mahdollistaa kaksi biopolitiikkaa koskevaa avausta. Ensinnäkin esitän, että Giorgio Agambenin ajatus biopolitiikan ja suvereenin vallan yhtäläisyydestä on kestämaton. Bodinin poliittinen ajattelu toimii esimerkkinä siitä, että toisillensa vastakkaiset teknologiat voivat esiintyä samanaikaisesti säilyttäen silti niiden välillä vallitsevan käsitteellisen eron. Toiseksi esitän, että Foucault erehtyy väittäessään biopolitiikkaa yksinomaan moderniksi ilmiöksi. Väitän, että Bodin on erinomainen esimerkki biopolitiikasta ennen Foucault'n määrittelemää modernia "biopoliittista aikaa".

Avainsanat: Jean Bodin, Michel Foucault, biopolitiikka, biovalta, hallinnallisuus, suvereeni valta, väestö, valtiorasismi

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Samuel Lindholm

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TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to examine the biopolitical elements in the political works of the French philosopher and jurist Jean Bodin (1529/30–1596), especially those posed in his 1566 major opus *Les six livres de la République* (*Six Books of the Commonwealth*).¹ In other words, we seek to answer whether and to what extent Bodin can be considered as the predecessor of modern life-affirming and maximizing policies – the politics over life (*bios*). However, the Angevin author is often thought of as the architect behind the modern theory of sovereignty² – not biopolitics. In the tradition begun by Michel Foucault, sovereign power, which is based on the ruler’s power to kill, and biopower, which seeks to maximize and optimize life, are usually considered opposite mechanisms.³ Because of this, it may seem that Bodin’s political system, which relies heavily on the monarch’s law-based despotism, might not have much to do with biopolitics. This is probably one of the reasons why the population-political elements in Bodin’s oeuvre have not received sufficient attention thus far.

However, it would appear that the theory of sovereignty is not Bodin’s only approach to studying power. My hypothesis is that the Angevin was also a pioneer in early modern biopolitical thought and someone who displayed great interest in both the quantity and the quality of the people in a manner that was still rather atypical for his era. Bodin’s political thought has been discussed previously from different kinds of Foucauldian perspectives by authors such as Thomas Berns, Mika Ojakangas, and Michel Senellart, most of whom have tackled the issue through the biopolitics-related notion of governmentality; however, there remain many issues to discuss in the framework of this first monograph dedicated to establishing an explicitly biopolitical reading of his political works.

¹ Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République* (Paris: Jacques du Puis, 1583).

² Bodin proposes famously that sovereign power is the absolute, perpetual, and indivisible highest power in a commonwealth marked by the capacity to create, alter, and remove laws. Such power is wielded ideally by an autocratic monarch, but it can also reside with the minority (aristocracy) or the majority (democracy) of citizens. *Ibid.*, I.8, 24, II.1, 224, 266.

³ Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 177–211.

The biopolitically charged components in Bodin's oeuvre are multi-faceted; he proposes various ways of controlling the number of people, which he sees as the greatest wealth and strength of the commonwealth, and thus as a resource.⁴ He introduces elaborate ways of governing the quality of the people by getting rid of undesirable elements that he believes inflict harm, corruption, or "illness" on the decent people.⁵ He also gives curious (bio)political significance to issues such as the climate and witchcraft. This allows us to argue that his political thought seems to include an element of biopolitics before the "proper age of biopolitics" (or modernity, as Foucault understood it) that would soon place biological living, productivity, and material wellbeing as the goals of virtually all politics.

After establishing a tentative biopolitical reading of Bodin's political thought, we can focus on additional inquiries related to the theory and history (or genealogy) of biopolitics itself. The process is cyclical; the additional questions are, in a sense, unlocked through our re-interpretation of Bodin's political philosophy, but they are also fundamental elements of the reading itself. Since our central hypothesis of Bodin as a forerunner of modern biopolitics provides support for some established notions but is also at odds with others, we have no choice but to participate in ongoing debates regarding the concept's fundamental definition.

We start off by discussing the prevailing theories formulated by the three central theorists of biopolitics: Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Roberto Esposito. After examining these core thinkers' widely recognized ideas, we widen our approach even further by discussing more recent, critical views developed by Ojakangas, who has challenged the somewhat stagnant hegemony by reinterpreting both the history of biopolitics and the division between sovereign power and biopolitics. My hypothesis is that identifying the biopolitical elements in Bodin's thought can provide us with new perspectives on the politics of life, which may in return help us find answers to two additional questions regarding the nature of this elusive notion:

1) Reading Bodin as a biopolitical thinker allows us to take part in recent discussions concerning the potential connection between sovereign power and biopower; for example, should we understand the terror of the Third Reich through the notion of sovereign power or biopower, or as a combination of them both, as Foucault has already suggested? Foucault sees sovereign power and biopower as profoundly distinct technologies that can only join forces in their fullest capacities during an instance of state racism that optimizes the population by getting rid of its own undesirable members.⁶ Agamben has challenged this viewpoint by arguing that the technologies share a common origin and that they have remained tied together since the very beginning of Western politics. In other words, Agamben argues that there is absolutely no sense in even trying to make

⁴ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 705–706.

⁵ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 181–182.

⁶ Foucault discusses the topic of state racism in his 1975–1976 lectures at the Collège de France. Michel Foucault, *"Il faut défendre la société": Cours au Collège de France (1975–1976)*, eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 1997), 228.

a conceptual separation between the two.⁷ How can we navigate this gridlock? Instead of looking at the Nazi politics of death, which appears to be a rather obvious amalgamation of biopolitics and sovereign power regardless of whom we consult, we ought to, instead, examine the modern democratic state's social policies and its life-affirming governing that rarely negates life. Is this kind of biopolitics really a result of the technologies' fundamental entanglement, as Agamben seems to suggest?

An initial look into Bodin's political thought seems to suggest that the two technologies ought to remain conceptually separate, but they can co-exist and enforce one another, at least as long as the sovereign does not resort to using its power to kill in connection to biopolitics – and even then, the two can still come together and do so in the most all-embracing manner, but only through the logic of state racism. This claim supports Ojakangas⁸ who has challenged Agamben by stating that because the key objectives of the two technologies are irreconcilably different – one optimizes life while the other ignores it or negates it altogether – they can only coincide momentarily. When all life is affirmed and none of it is negated, there seems to be little space for the core functions of sovereign power – the power to kill. Again, this is not to say that the other dimensions of sovereign power besides its deathly core cannot operate side by side with biopolitics outside state racism in other scenarios as long as their mismatched central objectives remain on separate levels of the polity.

2) We gain a fresh viewpoint into the history of biopolitics by asking when this phenomenon emerged and whether the “new technology” was truly so new after all? We look into the possibility of developing the Agambenian⁹ idea of biopolitics as something that was put into action long before the eighteenth century, unlike what Foucault¹⁰ has proposed. When it comes to the ongoing debate concerning the history of biopolitics, I see this current project as a direct continuation of the arguments that Ojakangas put forward in his pioneering work *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics: A Reinterpretation of the History of Biopower*.¹¹ As the name of the book suggests, Ojakangas provides a long-overdue re-interpretation of the history of biopolitics by revealing that Greek antiquity was already full of biopolitical theories and practices. Although this assertion is somewhat reminiscent of Agamben's speculative periodization, Ojakangas' empirical analysis is able to accomplish similar results without the superfluous equation of sovereign power and the politics of life as well as the unsound definition of biopolitics as a form of exclusion that lies at the core of the Agambenian conception.

⁷ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1–12.

⁸ Mika Ojakangas, “Impossible Dialogue on Bio-power: Agamben and Foucault,” *Foucault Studies*, no. 2 (May 2005): 26.

⁹ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 1–12.

¹⁰ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 33–36.

¹¹ Mika Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics: A Reinterpretation of the History of Biopower* (London: Routledge, 2016).

According to Ojakangas, ancient biopolitics were virtually forgotten during late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.¹² This was largely due to the rise of Early Christianity, which had begun to place diminished value on mundane life. However, ancient biopolitical ideas were later reintroduced to the West through the Latin translations of Plato's and Aristotle's political texts, which started to appear during the late medieval period. This seems to have acted as the catalyst to a long "renaissance of biopolitics." Bodin was skilled at adapting Greco-Roman ideas into his political thought and, thus, operated as a link between ancient biopolitics and the kind of population-political governing that we witness today. Furthermore, the Angevin did not merely re-implement the biopolitical visions of the past, but also developed them further in a manner appropriate to his own era. Unlike Ojakangas's analysis, Foucault's and Agamben's takes on the history of biopolitics have been hypothetical and brief. The history of biopolitics during the (early) modern era remains largely unwritten – the current project aims to cover part of this gap.

My hypothesis is that Bodin's political thought contained an element of biopolitics before the biopolitical era of modernity (which, according to Foucault, commenced during the eighteenth century).¹³ In other words, the Angevin showcased several biopolitical ideas, although he did not live in the commonly accepted biopolitical era, which would emerge shortly after his demise when the material wellbeing of the person as a biological being became to be regarded as the goal of virtually all politics instead of wellbeing that was achieved through contemplation, a virtuous life, or the life after death.

Finally, we have the opportunity to speculate whether the previously mentioned reflections provide us with new perspectives on some of the biopolitical problems that we are facing today. These issues include, for example, the existential crises caused by wars, climate change, and future pandemics. Meanwhile, groundbreaking developments in bioscience, gene technology, and artificial intelligence could provide pathways to both solving our current biopolitical problems and the emergence of unprecedented disasters. Even though specific biopolitical goals and the means of achieving them have undergone countless aleatoric mutations, their shared core object of maximizing and optimizing life and its capabilities seems to have remained more or less untouched.

It seems reasonable to argue that investigating the history of biopolitics equates to examining a logic that is still prevalent today. This is to say that a heightened understanding of the crucial events in the genealogy of biopolitics may allow us to make fresh evaluations concerning the current and upcoming crises. Hence, delving into (the history of) biopolitics seems to retain its pertinence, at least as long as we continue to exist in an age that is defined by a biopolitical logic. In other words, it would appear that the concept of biopolitics will remain relevant for as long as we continue to view wars, famines, viruses,

¹² Mika Ojakangas, "Michel Foucault and the Enigmatic Origins of Bio-Politics and Governmentality," *History of the Human Sciences* 25, no. 1 (February 2012): 12.

¹³ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 182–184.

natural disasters, and scientific breakthroughs as challenges that require biopolitical interventions – that is until humanity perishes, begins to once again disregard life, or overcomes the necessity of having biological bodies altogether.

Bodin's political works, especially his *République*, act as the research material of the current project. The Angevin proposed most of his biopolitically significant ideas in the somewhat overlooked concluding books of his six-part magnum opus. Here, he opted for a more applied approach compared to the theoretical take witnessed in the first four books, which have consequently received most of the scholarly attention. Bodin's biopolitically motivated ideas concerning the optimal number of citizens, his support for revitalizing Roman-style censuses and censuses, as well as his famous theories regarding climates and bodily humors are all discussed in Books V and VI. Therefore, this is where we ought to focus most of our attention.

The majority of my citations to the *République* refer to the 1583 French edition, which is the go-to source for most Bodin scholars. I also use other versions of the book, most importantly Bodin's own augmented translation of the work into Latin.¹⁴ Our viewpoint is supplemented even further by his other politically charged texts: his first significant work published in 1566, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (*Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*),¹⁵ a shorter 1568 treatise on economics and inflation, *La response de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit touchant l'encherissement de toutes choses, & le moyen d'y remedier* (*Response to the Paradoxes of Malestroit*),¹⁶ and, most importantly, his infamous 1580 anti-witchcraft pamphlet, *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (*On the Demon-Mania of Witches*),¹⁷ which we examine closely in a separate chapter.

Our project can be described as a combination of political theory and intellectual history. The principal method of the work is Foucauldian *genealogy*. The Frenchman adapted this Nietzschean¹⁸ concept in order to study the contingent and oftentimes fragmented descent of historical discourses through the turbulent oscillations of power and knowledge.¹⁹ Genealogy does not equate to the search for grandiose and metaphysical origins of things; instead, it reveals

¹⁴ Jean Bodin, *De Republica libri sex* (Paris: Jacques du Puis, 1586).

¹⁵ Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (Paris: Martin Juvenem, 1566); available in English: Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, trans. Beatrice Reynolds (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969).

¹⁶ Jean Bodin, *La response de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit touchant l'encherissement de toutes choses, & le moyen d'y remedier*, in *Les paradoxes du seigneur de Malestroit, conseiller du Roy, & Maistre ordinaire de ses col[m]ptes, sur le fait des Monnoyes, presentez à sa Maiesté, au mois de Mars, M.D.LXVI: Avec la response de Jean Bodin audicts Paradoxes*, by Jean de Malestroit and Jean Bodin (Paris: Martin le Jeune, 1578), 17–128; available in English: Jean Bodin, *The Response of Jean Bodin to the Paradoxes of Malestroit: And the Paradoxes*, trans. George Albert Moore (Chevy Chase, MD: The Country Dollar Press, 1956).

¹⁷ Jean Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (Antwerp: Jean Keerbergh, 1593) For an abridged English translation, see Jean Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, ed. Jonathan L. Pearl, trans. Randy A. Scott (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2001).

¹⁸ Foucault appropriated the notion of genealogy from Nietzsche's aptly titled 1887 book *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," in *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite*, eds. Suzanne Bachelard, François Dagognet, and Georges Canguilhem (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1971), 145–172.

to us that the first steps of most discourses are often lowly, clumsy, and even self-contradictory. Genealogy also teaches us that the past is not connected to the present by an uninterrupted bridge of progress. To quote Foucault, we ought to instead focus on “the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us.”²⁰ Finally, it is a critical tool that teaches us about the history of today (or, in Foucault’s case, the French political order of the 1970s and 80s). These maxims lend themselves seamlessly to our task of uncovering the early modern biopolitical discourse witnessed in Bodin’s political thought.

The descent of ancient biopolitics into early modernity or into our own present time should not be understood in terms of linear continuation or as an unbroken chain of evolution. Instead, we are dealing with a series of loosely connected and even utterly detached ideas – a haphazard series of misinterpretations, dead letters, and inconsistencies, which, however, all belong to a single discourse unified by the politics of life. All of these separate strands are oriented toward the maximization and optimization of life instead of its negation. We can witness such outlooks in Plato’s, Aristotle’s, and Bodin’s texts, even though some of their goals, appraisals, and instruments happen to contradict one another. On a similar note, it can be argued that while our current practices should not be understood as simply the fine-tuned versions of ancient or early modern ideas, all three eras showcase an unmistakably similar biopolitical logic.

We must remain aware of the fact that the concept of biopolitics did not exist during Bodin’s time. The modern concept of population and the scientific, biological understanding of life were also yet to emerge. Because the Angevin made no reference to the concept of biopolitics per se, it could appear somewhat problematic to proclaim him as a theorist of biopolitics without any further disclaimers. This is why I wish to emphasize that the current investigation aims to determine whether or not Bodin’s political thought contained distinguishable biopolitical elements that are akin to the rationalities that Foucault used as signifiers for the phenomenon that he believed to have emerged during the eighteenth century. It is imperative to realize that Foucault’s original take faces a similar problem of anachronism – in either case, the notion of biopolitics was not actually used by those who came up with the practices that we can, nevertheless, consider biopolitical by today’s standards.²¹ We consider biopolitics as an analytical tool – our focus is not aimed at the brief history of the concept that did not exist in its current Foucauldian sense before the 1970s. We are interested in the phenomenon itself.

This work has seven main chapters. After the introduction, we focus on the fundamentals of biopolitics in a chapter called “Biopolitics and Sovereign Power.” Here, we look into the arguments utilized in the debates concerning the contested

²⁰ Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *The Foucault Reader*, eds. Paul Rabinow and Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 81.

²¹ See Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 11.

birth of biopolitics and the alleged connection between biopolitics and sovereign power. Discussing these heavily intertwined themes allows us to establish the theoretical framework of this current project. The task of the chapter is twofold; firstly, we are looking to identify some of the most important ideas regarding biopolitics and sovereignty and, secondly, we ask where our re-interpretation stands in relation to the prevailing literature. Examining these questions provides us with a sturdy foundation that helps us at the later stages of the work, during which we propose Bodin as one of the significant biopolitical thinkers before the proper biopolitical era of modernity.

The aim of the third chapter, entitled “Bodin and Politics – Theory and Practice,” is to provide necessary background information regarding Bodin and his political thought. We start off with a brief biographical sketch designed to shine a light on the polymath’s tumultuous sixteenth-century life as a jurist, a political player, and a multi-faceted author. We take time to discuss issues related to his career, key works, exploits in high politics, and major controversies (especially those surrounding his ambiguous personal faith during a time of great religious unrest). Most importantly, however, we concentrate on the fundamentals of Bodin’s political philosophy. We approach this topic by focusing on each of the three elements (absoluteness, indivisibility, and perpetuity) that make up his groundbreaking theory of sovereignty. We conclude the chapter by discussing Bodin’s political thought from today’s perspective; we examine whether some of his ideas remain important today and what hinders his classic works from resonating with a modern readership.

In the fourth chapter, “Bodin’s Population Theory and Populationism,” we discuss the Angevin’s unique role in the history of political theory and especially his immense impact on what has been dubbed later as “population thought.” We focus on Bodin’s role as an outspoken forerunner of “populationism” (not to be confused with populism), or, in other words, as a political thinker who was keen on maximizing the number of people, which he saw as the greatest wealth and strength in the commonwealth. We examine Bodin’s critique of the likes of Plato and Aristotle who were looking to limit the number of citizens and the various methods he would employ to achieve population growth, such as restricting birth control while incentivizing reproduction through the adoption of Roman-style marriage laws. We also investigate Bodin’s population-politically charged takes on issues including the organization of healthy cities, providing the needy with the necessities of life, preventing epidemics, and improving the conditions of the poor and slaves.

The fifth chapter, “Censors, Censuses, and Biopolitics,” has to do with Bodin’s desire to reinstitute the ancient magistracy of censors that he would charge with the double task of holding censuses and providing (moral) censorship. We commence by providing background information regarding the Roman magistracy and referring to the prevailing research literature, because previous authors have already established some links between Bodin’s views on censorship and Foucault’s conceptions (especially that of governmentality). The Angevin’s censors gather valuable statistics, police the population, and isolate

and massify their targets simultaneously. Next, we highlight even more population-political tasks granted to the censors. These include the regulation of reproduction, breaching the alleged border between the private and the public spheres, and getting rid of undesirable people in a manner that seems to correspond perfectly with the Foucauldian notion of state racism.

The sixth chapter, “The Political Nature of Climates and Temperaments,” explores Bodin’s adoption of ancient and medieval notions of climatic zones, the four bodily humors, and the resulting temperaments, as well as the alleged effects that these environmental factors have on people’s health, behavior, and politics. Climate theory is an explicitly political matter for Bodin, who believes that commonwealths ought to be built in accordance with their specific surroundings. Furthermore, he claims that different peoples should also be ruled in distinct manners due to their varied natural inclinations, while rulers’ obliviousness to their surroundings could lead to political disasters. The Angevin brings up a plethora of other biopolitically significant environmental aspects that include sexual behavior as well as physical and mental health. He stresses that at least some inclinations can be altered with enough time and appropriate political interventions, ranging from education to physical exercise and cultivating the mind by reading books.

The seventh chapter, “The Biopolitical Elements of a Demonology,” provides an analysis of Bodin’s most controversial work, the 1580 book on recognizing and killing witches, the *Démonomanie*.²² In this chapter, we discuss the early modern European witch hunt and some of the political aspects of this tragic series of events. However, our particular focus is on Bodin’s contributions to the genre of “demonology,” which he published as the witch hunt was beginning to reach its peak. Furthermore, we emphasize the political (and especially biopolitical) aspects of his inquiry. It is not my intention to reduce the entire logic of the witch hunts to mere (bio)politics. However, it is imperative to note that while it is true that Bodin cites several motives for the persecutions, he is particularly famous for his overtly political take on the topic, which seems to include an unmistakable biopolitical element. We discuss witchcraft as a threat to life, the security of the commonwealth, and the existence of the entire human race. We also take time to investigate what the Angevin’s fascinating work of demonology has to say about the biopolitically significant questions of reproduction, birth control, and abortion.

The eighth and penultimate chapter before the “Conclusions” is called “Rethinking Sovereignty and Biopolitics with Bodin.” In this chapter, we circle back to the beginning in order to figure out whether Bodin’s political thought contains a biopolitical element. After answering this question, we can focus on the two additional inquiries that help us complete our reading: firstly, we figure out whether biopolitics and sovereign power should be seen as distinct concepts that can co-operate in some sense like they seem to do in Bodin’s political thought. Secondly, we debate whether it is possible to maintain that biopolitical ideas and practices predate modernity. If this is indeed the case, Bodin’s political thought

²² Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*.

may be understood as a prime example of the renaissance of ancient biopolitics before the commencement of a biopolitical era, as Foucault understood it. In the end, we turn our focus briefly to modern biopolitics in order to speculate on whether the phenomenon retains its relevance in the political landscapes of today and tomorrow and whether it is still possible to learn something new by studying the curious history of biopolitical ideas and practices.

2 BIOPOLITICS AND SOVEREIGN POWER

Foucault (1926–1984) revolutionized the theory of power during the late 1970s, especially through his celebrated work *Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir* (*The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*).²³ What made the French philosopher's take on the concept so exceptional was the fact that he was not concerned with metaphysical questions related to the fundamental nature of power per se; instead, he devoted his time to analyzing various manifestations of power and their historical descent. Following this approach, Foucault ended up identifying two distinct *technologies* of power: 1) absolute *sovereign power* or *juridico-discursive power*, which he saw as an older manifestation that disregarded life or outright negated it, and 2) another, newer technology called *biopower* that approaches life with care while making individual human beings and entire populations the targets of meticulous political control.²⁴

Sovereign power can be characterized as the kind of rule exercised by medieval and early modern despots whose (more or less absolute) sovereignty was based on their right to kill those who violated their supreme dominance. Whenever a subject decided to break the laws, they performed a simultaneous attack against the persona of the sovereign. According to Foucault, modern biopower differs greatly from this long-standing technology; it is focused on optimizing the life of the people instead of displaying its true might solely through the act of killing.²⁵ Biopower controls, regulates, and optimizes life, understood here in the purest biological sense but also as a broader notion that encompasses the ideas of material wellbeing, security, and happiness.

Biopower considers the population as a resource, a workforce, and a place of intervention that can be influenced by regulating factors such as birth rates, life expectancies, and public health. This is a radical departure from sovereign power, which was virtually indifferent toward its subjects, who were seen as mere taxpayers and a disposable source of military might. This is to say that the old technology was mostly passive – it levied from the subjects and used its

²³ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 177–211.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

symbol, the sword, in order to intervene and inflict punishments. The new technology appears once again as the exact opposite of the old one; it is active in providing support and care for the population. The sword has lost its might since the success of states is now determined based on the happiness, security, and wellbeing of their population. The people are steered toward desirable actions in a subtle manner through corrective and curative normalization instead of strict laws and the ever-present implication of severe punishments.²⁶ Previously those who did not break the law could live their lives relatively unaffected by the sovereign, whereas the refined ways of control are more total in the sense that they now reach each and every one, whatever they do.

Foucault argued that the new technology of power was an exclusively modern occurrence and that its eighteenth-century emergence was tied to ongoing developments in the fields of “human sciences” such as biology, political economy, statistics, and other associated approaches that were starting to provide fresh perspectives into the notion of man. “For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question.”²⁷ Indeed, biopolitics seems to define the modern era like none other – we can witness biopolitical governing virtually everywhere around us. This fact is exemplified by the social policies of liberal democratic states that attempt to maximize the general wellbeing of their labor force. Such a task is undertaken with the help of instruments like (socialized) medicine, health campaigns, cancer screenings, and immunization programs. Although Foucault does not mention Nordic welfare states in this instance, they can certainly be argued to epitomize one of the historical climaxes of life-optimizing power.

However, the complex connection between biology and power is exemplified equally well by another approach, which Foucault has dubbed *state racism*.²⁸ This specific version of biopolitics is actually a mixture of biopolitics and sovereign power. According to the logic of state racism, “harmful” or “unwelcome” forms of life are killed, driven away, or otherwise exposed to either literal or figurative death (exercise of sovereign power) to optimize the life of primary targets within the same population or the population as a whole (exercise of biopolitics). “Racial purification” is the most obvious example of such logic. A bigoted polity can remove “impure” elements from the population as a means of increasing the vitality of a preferred “race.” A similar elimination can be argued based on factors such as health or even class status.²⁹ All examples of improving the population as a whole through the removal of its undesirable or dangerous elements can be described as state racism, whether or not such programs have anything to do with the modern notions of hereditary ethnicity or “biological race” per se.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 1 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 1:143.

²⁸ Foucault, “*Il faut défendre la société*”, 228.

²⁹ Ibid, 233–234.

The Third Reich and the Nordic welfare society are, thus, equal examples of biopolitics, although the former instance represents an admixture of the two technologies while the latter is, in a sense, closer to its undiluted form. However, it is important to note that the Nazis also relied on “positive” forms of biopolitics. They regulated the wellbeing of the “Aryan people” through a plethora of interventions, including a vigorous anti-smoking campaign.³⁰ Vice versa, the Nordic welfare countries have their own dark history of state-run eugenics. People diagnosed with certain (hereditary) conditions were often barred from marriage and reproduction until the latter half of the twentieth century, whereas Finland still calls for the sterilization of trans people looking to amend their legal gender.³¹ Biopolitics is a complicated phenomenon – there seems to be no way of capturing the entire notion through the ethical categories of “good” or “bad.” The concept's scope is simply too vast for such categorizations – liberal democracy, authoritarianism, and even totalitarianism have all adopted the biopolitical logic in one of its many forms. Some of these forms are still widely accepted (health care), while others are now frowned upon (most forms of eugenics).

2.1 Conflicting Definitions

As we have mentioned, biopower is the literal power over life. It shields, regulates, and promotes its targets (singular bodies and the entire population) through a wide variety of political interventions. According to Foucault, biopower consists of two “sub-technologies” that approach the question of life from distinct angles: firstly, there is discipline, which has to do with controlling single bodies, and, secondly, biopolitical regulation, which regulates the population as a whole. The sub-technologies emerge one after another during the simultaneous decline of the older technology of sovereign or juridico-discursive power, characterized by the power over life and death.³² However, the twofold technology of biopower does not replace its predecessor completely; instead, the two are able to co-exist and even co-operate, at least in some limited capacity.

In order to succeed in situating Bodin into the matrix of biopolitics, we must first establish what exactly the concept of biopolitics signifies according to the most pertinent thinkers in the field. We approach this question by taking a closer look into questions regarding the theory and history of biopolitics. In other words, we examine when the phenomenon first appeared and whether it is connected to the age-old technology of sovereign power. Finding an undisputed answer to these questions may prove challenging for two reasons: firstly, Foucault was not

³⁰ See Robert N. Proctor, “The Anti-Tobacco Campaign of the Nazis: A Little Known Aspect of Public Health in Germany, 1933–45,” *BMJ* 313, no. 7070 (December 1996): 1450–1553.

³¹ See Jemina Repo, “Governing Juridical Sex: Gender Recognition and the Biopolitics of Trans Sterilization in Finland,” *Politics & Gender* 15, no. 1 (2019): 83–106.

³² Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 177–211.

always consistent with the concepts that he himself made famous³³ and, secondly, biopolitics has become an exceedingly prevalent subject of study, which seems to have taken on a life of its own. Nowadays, the notion can be used to signify an overabundance of distinct ideas, many of which stand in contradiction with Foucault's original analysis.

The various thinkers in the field of biopolitics, including but not limited to Foucault, Agamben, Esposito, and most recently Ojakangas, are far from unanimous when it comes to defining some of the key details concerning their shared topic of interest. One of the most notable issues to remain debated is the original emergence of biopolitical ideas and practices. This discussion started when Agamben³⁴ stated boldly that Foucault³⁵ was mistaken in understanding biopolitics as a strictly modern phenomenon. According to Agamben, we should instead turn our gaze to the very genesis of occidental politics in order to uncover the concealed birth of biopolitics as a foundational political event. In other words, biopolitics should be understood as something that is, in fact, as ancient as our understanding of politics itself.

Esposito,³⁶ another prominent theorist of biopolitics, has also considered the existence of biopolitics before the age of modernity. He approaches the topic by discussing Plato's³⁷ famous attempt to ensure that only the fittest people were able to reproduce. However, Esposito ends up claiming that this arrangement was not yet exactly biopolitical. Thus, he opposes the Agambenian idea of pre-modern biopolitics in favor of a position that is, in a sense, closer to Foucault's original periodization. The question of ancient biopolitics is, however, far from settled. Esposito's initial take has been challenged explicitly by the fourth theorist of biopolitics to receive our spotlight, Ojakangas, who has conducted extensive studies regarding Plato's eugenics and other Greco-Roman ideas related to the question of life. According to Ojakangas, Plato and Aristotle were undeniably biopolitical thinkers.³⁸

The relationship between sovereign power and biopolitics is another topic of constant debate. Foucault believed that the old technology of sovereign power over life was "absolutely incompatible"³⁹ with the first of the new sub-technologies of biopower, discipline. Vengeful punishments and the outright elimination of life do not seem to compute with the (re-)educational

³³ The notion of biopolitics was popularized by Foucault. However, Rudolf Kjellén had used the concept as early as in 1905 in order to discuss, among other matters, the state regulation of the population. Foucault's first mention of biopolitics took place at a 1973 conference held in Rio. Rudolf Kjellén, *Stormakterna* (Stockholm: Hugo Gebers Förlag, 1905), 26; See Markus Gunneflo, "Rudolf Kjellén: Nordic Biopolitics before the Welfare State," *Retfærd årgang* 38, no. 3 (2015): 24–39; Michel Foucault, "La vérité et les formes juridiques," in *Dits et écrits II: 1970–1975*, trans. J. W. Prado Jr. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 538–646.

³⁴ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 1–12.

³⁵ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 33–36.

³⁶ Roberto Esposito, *Bíos: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, trans. Timothy C. Campbell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 53–54.

³⁷ Plato, *Republic*, in *Plato*, trans. Paul Shorey, vols. 5–6 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 5.461b.

³⁸ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 18–19.

³⁹ Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 35.

normalization of bodies. Meanwhile, the second sub-technology of biopower, regulation of the population, can operate with sovereign power if they collaborate in order to eliminate an undesirable portion of the population.⁴⁰ To complicate matters further, Foucault abandons the concept of biopolitics in his later work, only to introduce another, closely related notion of governmentality, which provides additional understanding about certain prototypical approaches toward the phenomenon of population long before the actual age of biopolitics – that is, while sovereign power is still understood as the dominant technology of power, according to his own previous analyses.

Agamben contests the separation between the two manifestations of power altogether by stating that they have actually been linked together by a shared yet hidden bond since their mutual inception.⁴¹ Meanwhile, Esposito understands sovereignty as part of what he calls the modern *immunitary paradigm*. According to him, sovereignty should not be understood as something that steps into the frame “before or after biopolitics,”⁴² but as part of a life-preserving construction that includes both technologies. On yet another note, Ojakangas has argued that sovereign power and biopolitics are, in fact, isolated entities that remain so contradictory to each other that they cannot form any kind of a true synthesis.⁴³ Ojakangas does not disagree with the fact that the Third Reich utilized both biopolitics and sovereign power, but he goes on to state that the virtually paradoxical technologies were only able to function together in an “irreconcilable tension”⁴⁴ that absolutized sovereign power (death) instead of biopolitics (care).

This chapter aims to examine these four distinct interpretations of biopolitics in order to discuss both the similarities that they might share and the crucial differences between them. Firstly, we look at Foucault’s two approaches, or periodizations, concerning these questions; his earlier work on biopolitics and his closely related governmentality analysis that seems to both alter and expand his original project. Secondly, we discuss Agamben’s, Esposito’s, and Ojakangas’ divergent views concerning the birth of biopolitics and the alleged relationship between sovereign power and biopolitics. Thirdly, and finally, we compare these ideas in order to examine if there is any common ground left to elaborate on. My objective is to establish a solid theoretical understanding of biopolitics that can be used as a foundation for our upcoming biopolitical reading of Bodin’s political thought.

One may be wondering why we must focus on these two specific questions in order to establish a biopolitical reading of Bodin’s political works. Understanding the relationship between the distinct “forms” of power is imperative for the purposes of studying the biopolitical aspects in Bodin’s political theory because the Angevin is already recognized widely as the progenitor of the modern theory of sovereign power. This fact alone may include or exclude him from the matrix of biopolitics, depending on which of the

⁴⁰ Foucault, “*Il faut défendre la société*”, 228.

⁴¹ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 1–12.

⁴² Esposito, *Bíos*, 57.

⁴³ Ojakangas, “Impossible Dialogue on Bio-power,” 26.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

theorists we choose to consult. Discussing the birth of biopolitics is equally necessary because an initial look into Bodin's thought seems to hint toward elements of biopolitics before the modern era of biopolitics, which, according to some of our key theorists, should not be possible. Therefore, it is imperative to figure out whether and to what extent these biopolitical elements were able to exist before the biopolitical era designated by Foucault.

2.2 Michel Foucault's Two Periodizations

It may be argued that Foucault constructs two distinct narratives for the birth of biopolitics. He proposes the first of these accounts famously in the opening volume of his book series *The History of Sexuality (Histoire de la sexualité)*⁴⁵ and in the preceding lecture series "Society Must Be Defended" ("*Il faut défendre la société*").⁴⁶ In these instances, biopolitics is seen as a purely modern technology of power that does not replace sovereign power per se. However, the two can only interact with each other in a restricted manner. In another narrative, stemming from Foucault's later lectures, similar but not-quite-biopolitical themes related to the governing of the population can be found much earlier. Such is the case, for example, with the "Judeo-Christian" pastoral power that takes care of everyone in general and each one in particular. This logic is somewhat reminiscent of the upcoming biopolitical rationality.⁴⁷ Foucault's latter approach to the question of population has been interpreted as a sort of genealogy for the age of biopolitics.⁴⁸ In other words, the diverse historical mechanisms of governmentality can be seen to build up to constitute the modern biopolitical era, which, in return, can be seen as the most recent and current form of governmentality.

When it comes to governmentality, I am especially interested in examining its historically specific "pre-biopolitical" forms as opposed to another, more general understanding of the notion as something that is still going on today.⁴⁹ Studying historical governing is vital to this current project because Foucault seems to think that such practices started to develop during the paradigm of sovereign power (if we choose to follow his previous analyses). The later addition of governmentality can be interpreted as an attempt to explain the early ideas and practices that bear a certain resemblance to biopolitics without having to

⁴⁵ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 177–211.

⁴⁶ Foucault, "*Il faut défendre la société*", 213–235.

⁴⁷ Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population: Cours au Collège de France (1977–1978)*, ed. Michel Senellart (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2004), 130–131.

⁴⁸ Alessandro Fontana and Mauro Bertani, "Situating the Lectures," in "*Society Must Be Defended*": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*, by Michel Foucault, eds. Alessandro Fontana and Mauro Bertani, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 273–274.

⁴⁹ Mitchell Dean makes this important distinction in his work *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* that focuses more on the other dimension of governmentality. Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE, 2009), ch. 1.

renounce his previous ultimatum, according to which the age of modernity is the birthplace of biopolitics.

2.2.1 Biopower

According to Foucault, biopower was not born in one decisive moment. Instead, it is an amalgamation of two distinct components that emerged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The two-pronged technology of biopower operates on separate yet linked poles that provide a binary approach to the question of life: a micro level (oriented toward single bodies) and a macro level (oriented toward entire populations).⁵⁰ The first of the two techniques, discipline, or an anatomo-politics of the human body, as Foucault also calls it, was formed during the seventeenth century. This micro level of biopower is focused on disciplining single bodies in a way that is “centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility ...”⁵¹

According to Foucault, the second stratum of biopower, biopolitics, was formed later, during the eighteenth century.⁵² This sub-technology operates on the macro level of the entire population and is “focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary.”⁵³ The notion of population is also the key to understanding Foucault’s other definition of biopolitics as an attempt “to rationalize problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population: health, hygiene, birthrate, life expectancy, race.”⁵⁴

One should be aware of the fact that the aforementioned conceptual separation between a specific “biopolitics” and an umbrella-like “biopower” is often but a mirage. Indeed, the notion of “biopolitics” is habitually used as a synonym for “biopower” in order to denote the holistic idea of all power related to the question of life instead of signifying just the macro level, as Foucault occasionally intended without much success. In the framework of this current work, the distinction has been emphasized whenever doing so is necessary for

⁵⁰ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 182–184.

⁵¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1:139. Foucault had already detailed the emergence of disciplinary power in his earlier 1975 book *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison (Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison)*. Here, he argues that the modern disciplinary society is analogous to Jeremy Bentham’s auto-disciplinary architectural scheme, the panopticon. The outer perimeter of this circular structure is lined with rooms or cells that can be surveilled constantly from a central tower that is designed specifically to hide the possible presence of a guard. The prisoner, patient, student, or factory worker who dwells within the panopticon can always be seen, but has no way of telling when they are being watched. This forces the subject to conduct their own actions constantly in an auto-disciplinary manner. Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 201–206; see Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings*, ed. Miran Božovič (London: Verso, 1995).

⁵² Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 182–184.

⁵³ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1:139.

⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978–1979*, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 317.

the sake of an argument; in most cases, biopolitics has been used in its more widespread sense that refers to all politics of life while keeping the macro level as the natural focus.

It is also important to note that regulating the population does not replace the previously emerged sub-technology of discipline; instead, the two are merged together and can reinforce each other in the form of uninterrupted synchronization. This is because they approach life from different perspectives – they occupy separate plateaus and utilize distinct instruments.⁵⁵ Even though they have their own specific targets, the singular body and the entirety of a population, they are also tied together, especially through the phenomena of sex and reproduction, which fall into the territories of both technologies.⁵⁶ Sexual acts are performed by individual bodies, but their outcome has the potentiality of affecting the entire population. The sheer proximity of the two techniques and their occasional overlap are perhaps some of the reasons why biopolitics and biopower have become so synonymous.

Although the new mechanics and their explicit orientation toward the question of life stand in stark contrast to the ancient technology of power based on the right to kill, their emergence did not abolish sovereign power, which continues to play a significant role even today.⁵⁷ The most notable modern example of sovereign power in its fullest capacity is the twentieth-century totalitarian regimes which relied on both sovereign power and biopolitics.⁵⁸ The Third Reich devised a seemingly paradoxical program of state racism where some forms of life were allegedly promoted and safeguarded by eliminating those who were deemed harmful or unfit to life.⁵⁹

Another contemporary example of protecting the masses through eliminating a few presents itself when an alleged terrorist is killed or receives the death penalty (which is still widely in use, even in some developed countries). Even though the preservation and optimization of life must always remain the end of biopolitics, it can allow for the negation of supposedly detrimental parts of the population in order to reach its telos. Therefore, death can be understood as a mere side product of the biopolitical machine but never as its primary objective. A third way of approaching state racism is to think of the biopolitical machine as a dog breeder who attempts to create the optimal lineage of healthy, fit, and beautiful specimens by separating the animals that are supposed to mate from those that are to be spayed, neutered, or euthanized in order to avoid the degeneration of desirable traits. For Foucault, this kind of logic seems to be the only channel through which the power to kill and the desire to maximize life can be combined in any authentic sense.

Foucault believes that both biopolitics and its deathly arrangement with sovereign power, state racism, are of somewhat recent origin. More specifically, he argues that biopolitics is an uncontestably modern occurrence. There are,

⁵⁵ Foucault, *“Il faut défendre la société”*, 216.

⁵⁶ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 141.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 181.

⁵⁸ Foucault, *“Il faut défendre la société”*, 227–234.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

however, many historical instances that bear a close resemblance to modern biopolitics long before this rather recent point in history (including but not limited to the possible biopolitical elements in Bodin's political thought, which this current project is attempting to uncover). It is possible that Foucault himself realized that the archaic technology of sovereign power was unable to explain the existence of pre-modern collisions between power and life that he, too, was perhaps starting to notice. Whatever the case may be, he would soon distance himself from the analysis of biopolitics in order to shift his focus toward the closely related notion of governmentality.

2.2.2 Governmentality

Esposito has stated that Foucault "oscillates between two possible periodizations (and therefore interpretations) of the paradigm that he himself introduced."⁶⁰ Thus far, we have discussed the first of them, according to which biopolitics should be understood as an exclusively modern phenomenon. The second periodization has to do with the historical narrative of governing that Foucault introduces in his papers and lectures after publishing the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. This second interpretation can be described as a genealogy of population-political ideas and practices that lead up to the modern age of biopolitics.⁶¹ Here, Foucault recognizes that they started to emerge before the eighteenth century, even though they had perhaps not yet reached their properly biopolitical form.

This new approach is centered around the notion of governmentality (*gouvernementalité*), Foucault's play on the words government (*gouvernement*) and mentality (*mentalité*). As the name might suggest, the term signifies new kinds of outlooks or approaches connected to governing. It is crucial to mention that Foucault does not use the notion of government in its usual sense as the functioning of a centralized bureaucratic machine, but instead as the "conduct of conduct," another play on French words that alludes to leading (*conduire*) self or others toward a certain behavior (*conduite*).⁶² Fortunately for the anglophone students of Foucault and governmentality, both of these ideas translate quite effortlessly into English.

Governing has taken many forms throughout history. The earliest example provided by Foucault is the benevolent "Judeo-Christian" *pastoral power*. This form of governing seems to have originated from the Mediterranean East and was allegedly unknown to the Greeks and the Romans.⁶³ The functioning of pastoral power is analogous to a good shepherd who is tasked with keeping an

⁶⁰ Esposito, *Bíos*, 52.

⁶¹ Fontana and Bertani, "Situating the Lectures," 273-274.

⁶² Michel Foucault, "Le sujet et le pouvoir," in *Dits et écrits IV: 1890-1988* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 237.

⁶³ Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, 132-133. However, Ojakangas has shown that the Greeks were familiar with the theme and that Plato's thought exhibits an entirely different kind of pastoral power. This alternative form of shepherd-like governance has to do with an animal breeder charged with keeping the human flock pure. Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 77-85.

eye constantly on both the individual sheep and the entire flock.⁶⁴ While the Judeo-Christian shepherd was especially concerned with herding souls away from perdition, the modern version of this dual governing focuses on people's mundane wellbeing. The *omnes et singulatim* structure (everyone as a part of the whole and each one as an individual) is, of course, highly reminiscent of the two-pronged technology of biopower, which has its eyes simultaneously on both the specific bodies and the entirety of the population.

Foucault also brings up several other strands of historical governmentality. He seems to be especially interested in the development of a specific "art of government" that would eventually take on the form of "the reason of state" (*raison d'État*), which started to form during the sixteenth century.⁶⁵ The *raison d'État* had to do with new ways of preserving the state itself instead of simply shielding the status of the sovereign. It was already aimed toward governing the people instead of focusing its efforts solely on territory, and it thirsted for statistics about the strength of the state rather than the traditional knowledge about laws.⁶⁶ Foucault agrees that the reason of state paid at least some attention to the phenomenon of population; however, such an outlook was later perfected by another apparatus, the final step provided by the introduction of *police*.

According to Foucault, it is "police that brings to light this new subject in this, if you like, general absolutist theory of *raison d'État*."⁶⁷ The notion of "police" should not be understood as law enforcement but instead in the sense of the word that is connected to the emergence of "police science" (*Polizeiwissenschaft*) and as a new "economic, social, we could even say this new anthropological system" that must "ensure that men live, and live in large numbers; it must ensure that they have the wherewithal to live and so do not die in excessive numbers."⁶⁸ In other words, police is a certain bundle of social policy programs connected to the emerging notion of population. This new outlook has to do with more than just "the immediate problem of surviving and not dying, but is now commanded by the problem of living and doing a bit better than just living."⁶⁹ Population has now arrived onto the political scene to a much fuller extent.

To summarize, Foucault's governmentality analysis can be argued to depict undertakings that bear some resemblance to biopolitical ideas and practices long before the modern era of actual biopolitics. In other words, the historical examples of governing can be described as crude apparatuses that were attempting to approximate the difficult-to-grasp notion of population. These and similar forms of governing were later altered, refined, and, in many ways, totalized during modernity. This process was, of course, non-linear and full of reversals, contradictions, and dead ends. Since historical governmentality can be

⁶⁴ Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, 132–133.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 243.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 261–292; See an in-depth breakdown of Foucault's analysis regarding the historical forms of governmentality in Danica Dupont and Frank Pearce, "Foucault contra Foucault: Rereading the 'Governmentality papers'," *Theoretical Criminology* 5, no. 2 (2001): 123–158.

⁶⁷ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2007), 278.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 326.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

understood as a kind of genealogy for the modern technology of biopower, one could argue that Foucault's oscillation between periodizations, as Esposito⁷⁰ describes it, appears as a way of having the cake and eating it, too. Foucault's move accounts for the existence of both a strictly limited historical era of biopolitics and a collection of pre-modern practices that include some kind of reference to the phenomena that we now associate with population. As we shall soon find out, the biopolitical reading of Bodin's political thought that we are attempting to achieve in this current work is somewhat reminiscent of Foucault's double structure.

2.3 Other Approaches to Biopolitics

2.3.1 Giorgio Agamben and the Unveiling of a Fundamental Connection

Biopolitics maintained its popularity among political theorists and philosophers after Foucault's demise in 1984. Agamben is without a doubt the most famous thinker to carry the torch of biopolitical analysis. The Italian philosopher adopts, but also adapts, the Foucauldian concept in his eminent 1995 work *Homo sacer: Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita* (*Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*) and in the subsequent multi-part *Homo Sacer* book series. In his main work, Agamben argues that while biopolitical practices do indeed take center stage in modernity, we are not actually dealing with the birth of biopolitics but, instead, with the unveiling of its hidden existence.⁷¹ The core of what defined biopolitics for Foucault, modern interest in sexuality and humankind as a species, should thus be seen as mere "avatars" that help reveal the fundamental entanglement of biopolitics and sovereign power that has actually existed since the very dawn of Western politics.⁷²

With this single strike, Agamben is able to contest two of Foucault's central theses: one concerning the birth of biopolitics and another regarding its relation to the "older" technology of power. In fact, if we were to follow Agamben, biopolitics and sovereign power should not be considered as a "new" and "old" technology of power; instead, the emergence of one coincides perfectly with that of the other or, in Agamben's words, "the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power."⁷³ In other words, sovereignty is attained by declaring a state of exception,⁷⁴ which equates to the creation of a biopolitical subject of bare life who is banished outside the normal political order.

Bare life is exemplified by *homo sacer* – an ambiguous character in Roman law who can always be slain without punishment, but whose life cannot be

⁷⁰ Esposito, *Bíos*, 52.

⁷¹ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 120.

⁷² *Ibid*, 7, 120.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 6.

⁷⁴ Here, Agamben echoes Carl Schmitt's famous definition of the sovereign as "he who decides on the exception." Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. Georg Schwab (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1985), 5.

offered to the gods as a sacrifice since such a life is already theirs in some sense.⁷⁵ Agamben argues that excluding the *homo sacer* from the meaningful life in a society (*bios*) is the basis for both sovereignty and the biopolitical order – one does not exist without the other.⁷⁶ Unlike natural or biological life understood in terms of mere survival (*zoē*), which human beings share with all other living creatures, bare life and its paradigmatic example, *homo sacer*, share a special relationship with *bios* and the sovereign.⁷⁷ This relationship captures the outcast in an inclusive exclusion or, as Agamben himself puts it, “*the banishment of sacred life is more internal than every interiority and more external than every extraneousness* [Agamben’s cursive].”⁷⁸ It is important to note that this redefinition of biopolitics no longer resonates with the Foucauldian notion of a life-affirming power. Foucault emphasizes biopolitical inclusion, while Agamben focuses on sovereign exclusion.

Agamben makes a daring claim that all people bear a certain resemblance to the *homo sacer* in the ultra-biopolitical age of modernity. According to him, the division between the rule of law and the sovereign exception has been distorted permanently in a manner that resembles the structure of the concentration camp, which he understands as the ultimate space of exception and biopolitics.⁷⁹ The heaviest part of Agamben’s statement is that the paradigm of the camp did not cease after World War II and that we keep on witnessing it everywhere around us. This is to say that rules or rights have no meaning since a sovereign decision can simply override them at any given time. Such a decision can determine who gets to keep their privileges and whose rights are waived without a trial as they are forced to enter airport holding areas or anti-terror detention camps.⁸⁰

The utmost extreme instance of bare life is constituted by the starved and despairing captive of the concentration camp, the so-called *Muselmann*, the living dead stripped from all rights and positive human qualities.⁸¹ Their movements had started to resemble those of a praying Muslim due to their extreme hunger, cold, and deteriorated physical condition (hence the slang name *Muselmann*; German for Mussulman or Muslim).⁸² Even though all westerners bear a certain resemblance to the *homo sacer* (the rights that “protect” them are nothing but a thin illusion that can be taken away at practically any moment without the right

⁷⁵ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 71–72.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ This separation carries two significant problems. Firstly, Agamben himself is inconsistent when it comes to the three different ways of understanding life: *bios*, *zoē*, and *bare life*. He sometimes chooses to use *zoē* as a synonym for *bare life*. Secondly, it has been made apparent that the alleged division between *bios* and *zoē* never existed in antiquity. See Jussi Backman, “Aristotle,” in *Agamben’s Philosophical Lineage*, eds. Adam Kotsko and Carlo Salzani (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 15–26.

⁷⁸ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 111. See also Sergei Prozorov, *Agamben and Politics: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 197.

⁷⁹ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 170–172.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 98–99.

⁸¹ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive (Homo Sacer III)*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 41–44.

⁸² *Ibid.*

to a trial), they are not all like the *Muselmann* who has already been driven to the ultimate boundary between life and death.

With these original and, above all, bold suggestions, Agamben attempts to rectify the Foucauldian narrative regarding both the origin of biopolitics and the relationship that it shares with sovereign power. However, by doing so, he also ends up revamping the conceptual core of biopolitics. It is plain to see that the exclusionary and deadly dimensions which occupied only a peripheral role in Foucault's vision saturate Agamben's entire definition of the concept. It can even be argued that this is the only dimension of the entire biopolitical spectrum that receives sufficient attention in Agamben's analysis. Therefore, his reading appears as a reversed and condensed rendition of the original notion. Furthermore, it is questionable whether even this small sliver can be considered entirely biopolitical if it does not carry a population-political justification. In fact, Agamben's daring re-imagination disregards such a large portion of the Foucauldian idea that it has been claimed that the two are talking about different issues – Foucault discusses biopower, whereas Agamben seems to be focused on sovereign power.⁸³

As we have witnessed above, Foucault had already analyzed the thanatopolitical and exclusionary potential of biopolitics through the example of state racism. To propose a deadly combination of the two technologies is, therefore, nothing out of the ordinary. However, Agamben's decision to focus almost solely on this element in order to oppose the need for any distinction between the two technologies is unprecedented. The essential core of Foucauldian biopolitics, understood as benevolent care and maximization of life, is diminished into nothingness – the baby seems to have been thrown away with the bath water.⁸⁴

Even though a biopolitical society can indeed exclude some of its members (as it often does), nothing prevents it from providing care without such exceptions. There seems to be no need to assume a metaphysical rule that requires an initial ban before the administration of wellbeing. Agamben succeeds in posing important questions concerning the origins of biopolitics but frames his answer in a manner that omits a great deal of what the notion was designed to encompass. The question of biopolitics as something that optimizes life is left largely unanswered, and with it remains, equally without a satisfactory answer, the question concerning the history of such biopolitics. However, Agamben's re-interpretation is not without its merits – he reminds us of the fact that our rights can be taken away from us and that we are, thus, constantly only one small step away from becoming actual *homines sacri*.

2.3.2 Roberto Esposito on Immunity and Biopolitics

Esposito is probably the most recognizable thinker to discuss biopolitics besides Foucault and Agamben. In his 2004 book *Bíos: Biopolitica e filosofia* (*Bíos: Biopolitics*

⁸³ See Ojakangas, "Impossible Dialogue on Bio-power," 5–28.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

and Philosophy), Esposito brings up a lingering question that he describes as the enigma of biopolitics.⁸⁵ According to the Italian thinker, the prevailing literature has not been able to provide adequate reasons for why the notion of biopolitics can refer simultaneously to both politics *of* life (subjectification and affirmation) and politics *over* life (death).⁸⁶ Esposito goes on to claim that the only way of explaining these polarities is through a scheme that he calls “the paradigm of ‘immunization’ that seems to have eluded Foucault.”⁸⁷ The notion of immunization provides a solution to the enigma of biopolitics because its implementation preserves life through a simultaneous negation. This idea parallels the case of medical immunization achieved through vaccination, which introduces “within it a fragment of the same pathogen from which it wants to protect itself, by blocking and contradicting natural development.”⁸⁸ According to Esposito, Thomas Hobbes⁸⁹ seems to be the first to construct a prototype of this new paradigm:

In this sense we can certainly trace back a prototype to Hobbesian political philosophy: when Hobbes not only places the problem of the *conservatio vitae* at the center of his own thought, but conditions it to the subordination of a constitutive power that is external to it, namely, to sovereign power, the immunitary principle has virtually already been founded.⁹⁰

Here, sovereign power and biopolitics are understood as two parts of the same immunitary mechanism. Biological survival acts as the centerpiece of this arrangement, but it remains dependent on sovereign power, which Esposito (contra Foucault) understands as neither antithetical to biopolitics nor as a pre-biopolitical phenomenon.⁹¹ Furthermore, he does not define the notion of sovereign power in a sense that crystallizes around its right to kill; on the contrary, it seems to provide protection, as we can witness in the example of Hobbes’ *Leviathan*.⁹² After all, sovereignty secures the foundation of the life-conserving immunitary paradigm – it “acts to protect, or better to immunize, the community from a threatened return to conflict.”⁹³

Esposito’s determination to describe the twofold nature of biopolitics as an unsolved enigma seems somewhat odd, since both Foucault and Agamben have already weighed heavily on exactly the same issue. Firstly, as we have witnessed above, Foucault resolves this polarization by resorting to the notion of state racism, which he understands as an extreme combination of biopolitics and

⁸⁵ Esposito, *Bíos*, 32.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁸⁹ Esposito quotes the Hobbesian definitions of natural right and natural law. *Ibid.*, 67; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Francis B. Randall (New York: Washington Square Press, 1976), 87; See Foucault, “*Il faut défendre la société*”, 215.

⁹⁰ Esposito, *Bíos*, 46.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 60–61.

⁹³ Timothy C. Campbell, “Translator’s Introduction: *Bíos*, Immunity, Life: The Thought of Roberto Esposito,” in *Bíos: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, by Roberto Esposito, trans. Timothy C. Campbell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xii.

sovereign power. I would like to argue that Foucault's explanation alone provides us with the necessary tools needed in order to answer the "enigma" of how biopolitics can signify both life-preserving care and the deadly politics of exclusion.

Secondly, Agamben has approached the same issue with similar results; he agrees with Foucault that we are dealing with the co-operation of sovereign power and biopolitics. The difference between the two is that Agamben challenges his predecessor by claiming that the two technologies share a fundamental, unbroken connection rather than a limited and temporary one. While immunization is a fascinating addition to the theory of biopolitics, its inclusion begs a serious question: is Esposito's contribution simply another, even more complicated, way of explaining the already diagnosed deadly potentiality of biopolitics through an arrangement that once again includes both biopolitics and sovereign power? I would like to argue that this seems to be the case.

When it comes to the questions surrounding the history of biopolitics, Esposito's stance can be summed up as follows: since life-preserving immunity is a modern phenomenon prototyped by Hobbes, no real example of biopolitics has existed before modernity. Esposito goes on to highlight his position by asserting that even Plato's eugenic selection,⁹⁴ which was aimed toward ensuring that only the fittest individuals are able to reproduce, is only "directed to a communitarian sense" instead of "the preservation of the individual."⁹⁵ While Esposito makes a slight compromise by stating that this ancient form of eugenics bears at least some resemblance to modern biopolitics, he hesitates to trace the history of biopolitics back to antiquity. He decides to keep on arguing that Plato did not introduce an ethnographical or social selection but instead only "an aristocratic and aptitudinal one."⁹⁶

With these decisive maneuvers, Esposito refutes the idea of pre-modern biopolitics while still acknowledging the existence of some proximate phenomena. Thus, Esposito's argument stands in contrast with the previously examined Agambenian viewpoint, according to which biopolitics should be considered as ancient as Western civilization itself (although, as we have witnessed, Agamben's understanding of biopolitics does not seem to match Foucault's initial definition). Despite its many innovative nuances, Esposito's stance ends up coinciding roughly with Foucault's original analysis. The two thinkers seem to agree that biopolitics ought to be understood as a modern occurrence while admitting that neighboring, although not-yet-biopolitical practices, have been in play for much longer. So far, we have heard convincing arguments for and against the possible existence of pre-modern biopolitics and comparable practices. However, there is still one more critical perspective that we must address in order to complete the picture concerning the history of biopolitics and its relationship with sovereign power.

⁹⁴ Plato's eugenics and its resemblance to certain totalitarian practices is a well-known topic studied most notably by Karl Popper. See Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, vol. I (London: Routledge & Sons, 1947).

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 54.

⁹⁶ Esposito, *Bíos*, 53-54.

2.3.3 Mika Ojakangas on Ancient Biopolitics

The Finnish political theorist Ojakangas has also discussed Plato's eugenics and a plethora of other biopolitically charged Greco-Roman ideas. Even though Ojakangas agrees with Agamben by claiming that biopolitics is indeed an ancient phenomenon, he differs from the Italian philosopher when it comes to the alleged fundamental connection shared by biopolitics and sovereign power.⁹⁷ Ojakangas argues that Agamben has misinterpreted the definitions of the two technologies and that the horrendous acts of the Third Reich should not be seen as an example of absolute biopolitics, because the only thing that the Nazis managed to absolutize was the sovereignty of power that was only operating with biopolitics in an "irreconcilable tension."⁹⁸

Ojakangas continues by arguing that the excluded bare life shares a much closer connection with sovereign power than it does with biopolitics.⁹⁹ Therefore, it would be a great mistake to understand the paradigmatic subject of bare life, *homo sacer*, as the subject of biopolitics. Instead, the true target of biopower is represented by the middle-class member of a Nordic welfare state who enjoys all the benefits of a biopolitical society instead of being excluded from it. In other words, *homo sacer* is simply a by-product of biopolitics and certainly not its paradigmatic example. Ojakangas hammers the point home by stating that biopolitics can only be absolutized through care and never through death.¹⁰⁰

Despite their radical differences regarding the relationship between sovereign power and biopolitics, both Ojakangas and Agamben choose to trace the birth of biopolitics further back in history than Foucault ever intended. In his book *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, Ojakangas suggests that biopolitics has its roots in the philosophical works and political practices of ancient Greece.¹⁰¹ While Ojakangas disagrees with Foucault regarding the periodization of biopolitics, the two seem to agree that the contemporary political landscape is in a sense *more* biopolitical than it was before the eighteenth century. As we have witnessed, this idea is also shared by Agamben.

Ojakangas claims that Greek political thought was already full of distinct theories concerning the politics of life and the regulation of the quality and quantity of the population. In other words, Greek political philosophy seems to have included an unambiguous element of biopolitics before modernity (the era when biopolitics commenced, if we were to ask Foucault).¹⁰² Ojakangas finds much support for this daring argument; he puts most of his efforts into consulting the political works of Plato and Aristotle, who appear to have

⁹⁷ Ojakangas, "Impossible Dialogue on Bio-power," 26.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 27.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 6.

¹⁰¹ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 1-6. See also Mika Ojakangas, "Michel Foucault and the Enigmatic Origins of Bio-Politics and Governmentality," 1-14.

¹⁰² Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 7.

mastered the regulation of sex, eugenics, birthrates, and public health, or, ways “to organize life.”¹⁰³

Let us focus here on the preeminent case of Plato’s eugenics, which Esposito has also discussed previously. In *Laws*, Plato compares the selection of human beings to the animal breeding performed by a shepherd who purges the flock by separating the “sound” and “well-bred” from the “unsound” and “ill-bred.”¹⁰⁴ The shepherd ought to send the latter group away “while keeping the former under his care.”¹⁰⁵ In the *Republic* Plato goes as far as to devise a fake ballot that allows for the strongest and most beautiful specimens to have sex as often as possible in order to produce optimal offspring, while the children born outside of this intricate system of breeding should not be reared at all.¹⁰⁶

In the light of these and several other examples, Ojakangas disagrees explicitly with Esposito and argues that Plato’s eugenics should not be understood as a manifestation of traditional racism connected to aristocratic lineages but instead as a new kind of bio-meritocratic racism practiced by superior women and men seeking to eliminate inferior members of their own kin in order to prevent hereditary degeneration.¹⁰⁷ Plato’s eugenics and animal-style breeding of the strongest and most beautiful humans is thus “racist” in the same exact sense of the word that Foucault employed in the context of state racism. Both cases involve a group that is aiming to uphold its superiority by eliminating its own “undesirable” or “corruptive” members.

The critique that Ojakangas’ approach might attract has to do with the notion of life. Some may argue that since the distinctly modern concept of biological life did not yet exist, biopolitics could not have existed, either. While it is certainly true that the unprecedented modern turn renders the current form of biopolitics a unique phenomenon in some sense, Ojakangas’ examples prove that the ancients were clearly involved in the maximization and affirmation of material life, which had to be regulated, optimized, and prevented from degenerating. Another topic of contention has to do with the fact that life in the material sense did not seem to be the singular *main* interest of the ancient philosophers. It is well-known that Aristotle’s¹⁰⁸ greatest aspiration was to attain wellbeing, but he believed that true *eudaimonia* was achieved through the highest of virtues, contemplation, whereas Plato’s¹⁰⁹ allegory of the cave represents the

¹⁰³ Ibid, 7; Plato, *Statesman*, in *Plato*, trans. Harold N. Fowler, vol. 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 307e.

¹⁰⁴ Plato, *Laws*, in *Plato*, trans. R. G. Bury, vols. 10–11 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 5.735b–763a.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Plato, *Republic* 5.461, 7.535a.

¹⁰⁷ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 19.

¹⁰⁸ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 10.1177a. Jussi Backman describes this ultimate goal as *metabiopolitical* – it has a biopolitical foundation, which is, however transcended by a non-biopolitical *telos*. Jussi Backman, “*Bene vivere politice: Aristotelian Metabiopolitics of ‘Happiness,’*” in *Biopolitics and Ancient Thought*, eds. Jussi Backman and Antonio Cimino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁰⁹ Plato, *Republic* 7.517d.

“petty miseries” of the physical world as a mere shadow of the truth achieved through “divine contemplations.”

Nevertheless, this does not alter the fact that the Greek philosophers were already biopolitical thinkers in the most important sense of the word. The pre-eminence of contemplation (the most virtuous life), a path only available for a few, does not rule out the existence of a related biopolitical program which is responsible for making wellbeing or flourishing possible in the first place (and in a wider sense). Furthermore, who is to say that contemplative, or especially “mental,” forms of wellbeing cannot become the objects of biopolitical mechanisms, as they most certainly have in modernity? Biopolitics should not be understood as a bundle of techniques that only sustain mere material life, but as a holistic approach that tries to attain more than that – the flourishing of life. Furthermore, even though material wellbeing was perhaps not a similar goal of politics as it arguably is in a modern society (especially in the welfare society), it was already an immensely pressing and omnipresent issue, nonetheless.

If there is a difference between the two forms of biopolitics, it is only secondary. Biopolitics should not be seen as a matter of philosophical hierarchies but as a set of concrete mechanisms that can be applied to the real world. Foucault, too, mentions that the jurists were starting to problematize life in the context of political philosophy and social contract theories during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but he himself was more interested in analyzing the actual mechanics of power.¹¹⁰ The complex biopolitical programs of the Greeks (aimed toward achieving a maximized and flourishing life) are far more pronounced than those of Esposito’s example, Hobbes, who was mostly interested in the survival of mere life and a subsequent possibility of attaining happiness. Bodin, Hobbes’ predecessor, can be compared to Plato and Aristotle; even though he argues explicitly that contemplation is the highest good, he continues by adding that human life needs both contemplation and matters related to the mortal body, the latter of which has to be taken care of first.¹¹¹ Like the ancients, he also takes time to consider the necessities needed for the functioning of the commonwealth, which, like the human body, needs many basic things in order to prosper.¹¹²

Although unmistakable cases of biopolitics seem to exist long before modernity, it is possible to argue that the new era achieves unprecedented biopolitical heights due to the emergence of biology and other “human sciences” as well as the fact that biological life and material wellbeing are then, and perhaps only then, regarded as the explicit end of virtually all politics, instead of a virtuous life, contemplation, or the salvation of the soul. However, the current pre-eminence of mundane life and material wellbeing could only commence after the reception of ancient political texts during the late Middle Ages, which put an end to a biopolitical drought caused by the rise of Early Christianity, which was “not very interested in controlling and regulating the lives of populations.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Foucault, “*Il faut défendre la société*”, 215.

¹¹¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.1, 5–10.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Ojakangas, “Michel Foucault and the Enigmatic Origins of Bio-Politics and Governmentality,” 12.

Hence, the biopolitical era of modernity is simply a part of the ancient discourse – the current point of its genealogy.

2.4 The Birth of Biopolitics and its Connection to Sovereign Power

There are several conflicting ideas when it comes to the birth of biopolitics; Foucault understands the notion that he made famous as a modern phenomenon but also provides a second periodization, according to which the roots of biopolitical practices can be found by examining ancient pastoral power and other forms of historical governing. Esposito in a sense, follows Foucault's first attempt by stating that a biopolitical age was only able to commence after the modern birth of the immunitary paradigm, while Agamben and Ojakangas have taken the opposite stance by arguing that biopolitics is an ancient phenomenon. For Agamben, modernity symbolizes an unveiling of the age-old existence of biopolitics (understood as an amalgamation of biopower and sovereign power), whereas Ojakangas sees the same event simply as the peak of the biopolitical revival after a drought that was caused by Early Christianity.¹¹⁴ It is important to note that both the unveiling and the revival of biopolitics seem to correspond roughly with Foucault's (and Esposito's) timeline. Ojakangas' idea of a revived biopolitics also coincides with Foucault's depiction of a shrinking technology of sovereign power. This is what we call "the biopolitical era."

There seems to be no way around the fact that the "pre-biopolitical age" before and after "the biopolitical drought" is full of elements that cannot be explained without some reference to the concept of biopolitics. Even Foucault seems to agree with this statement to some extent in his governmentality analysis. Furthermore, there seems to be no doubt that modernity is accompanied by an unmatched age of biopolitics; all four authors seem to agree with this assertion in one way or another. To summarize, even though the classical philosophers regarded contemplation as the target of politics instead of biological life or mundane wellbeing, their political thought contained an additional element, which can be captured best through the notion of biopolitics. Therefore, we should admit that biopolitical elements existed before the strictly limited age of biopolitics and that the ideas of *biopolitical elements* and the *biopolitical era* ought to be separated in order to prevent further confusion. I believe that this approach will prove to be beneficial as we attempt to understand the population-political elements in Bodin's oeuvre written before the proper biopolitical era.

When it comes to the potential connection shared by sovereign power and biopower, this current project is faced with a captivating challenge: Bodin was the father of the modern theory of sovereignty, yet his political thought seems to

¹¹⁴ This revival can be witnessed, for example, in the works of political theorists such as Bodin and Giovanni Botero and in the Renaissance utopian texts of Thomas More and Tommaso Campanella, who were clearly inspired by Plato's *Republic*. See Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 135.

also include a distinct biopolitical element that we attempt to highlight in the following chapters. How are the biopolitical elements able to exist during the previous paradigm of power? I see no escape from the fact that sovereign power and biopolitics must always result in the “irreconcilable tension” of state racism in order to operate together in any sense that includes their fullest implementation in the same time and place in order to succeed in a shared objective. This is because sovereign power is characterized by its capacity to negate life, whereas biopolitics must always stay aimed toward its maximization and optimization.

However, relying solely on the notion of state racism constitutes a rather narrow path to understanding the co-existence of the technologies. It seems that the two do not need to establish the “demonic combination”¹¹⁵ of the Third Reich if they are to function without intervention in a manner that may benefit and reinforce both, yet on different conceptual levels (killing and “making live” cannot coincide without state racism), or perhaps in some kind of a diminished capacity (sovereign power does not use its deathly potential).¹¹⁶ My hypothesis is that both of these cases, the conceptually separate yet mutually enforcing element of biopolitics and sovereign power as well as the twisted combination of the two technologies, can be found in Bodin’s main work, which can be seen as a prime example of the renaissance of biopolitics witnessed before the alleged age of biopolitics.

¹¹⁵ Michel Foucault, “‘*Omnes et Singulatim*’: Towards a Critique of Political Reason,” in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley. (New York: The New Press, 2000), 311.

¹¹⁶ See a similar idea in Thomas Berns, *Souveraineté, droit et gouvernementalité: Lectures du politique modern à partir de Bodin* (Paris: Éditions Léo Scheer, 2005), 133–138.

3 JEAN BODIN AND POLITICS - THEORY AND PRACTICE

The enigmatic life of the jurist and political philosopher Jean Bodin began in either 1529 or 1530, probably in the historical Anjou region near Angers in western France. The Angevin author was well-versed in both civil law and the humanism of his time. He was able to make an impressive range of contributions – besides having a career as an attorney and a political adviser, he operated in fields such as philosophy of history, economic thought, the study of law, demonology, natural philosophy, education, moral philosophy, theology, and, perhaps most importantly, political theory. Bodin is best remembered for his groundbreaking work on the concept of sovereignty, which has cemented his place among the classics of early modern political thought. There is reason to regard Bodin as one of the most important political philosophers of the entire sixteenth century. Although his influence would continue to grow later on, many of his key works gained instant success. New editions, reprints, and translations of his books started to appear already during his lifetime.

Bodin's personal life was filled with both accomplishments and controversies. The second half of his life coincided almost perfectly with the disorderly time of the French Wars of Religion (1562–1598), which did not end until a few years after his demise. Bodin is best remembered for his intellectual work, but he was unable to secure a permanent position at the university. His interest in politics was not purely theoretical, as he was also a notable background figure in high politics that was once acquainted with the crowned heads of both France and England (however, he seems to have also aggravated both monarchs). His political career was rocky, to say the least. Furthermore, he may have been accused of heresy already as a youth, but it is almost certain that he faced such allegations in his later years. The controversies surrounding him did not cease after his death in 1596, because an unpublished work of comparative theology continued to add fuel to the flames. Some of the Angevin's most important works were eventually put into the Catholic index of forbidden books.

Bodin's subject matter was diverse, and so were his political opinions. This is why his works may appear inconsistent or even self-contradictory in the eyes of a twenty-first-century reader. Bodin used his voice against religious intolerance and slavery, but he was also an outspoken champion for the elimination of sorcerers and sorceresses during the peak of early modern European witch hunts. However, such inconsistencies are, at least partly, superficial. It has been argued that Bodin stayed coherent in his desire to tackle the political issues of the day, be it inflation or witchcraft, with equally relentless vigor.¹¹⁷ He was a man of his time who seemed to form most of his political opinions based on what he thought would bring most stability to the crises-ridden commonwealth. He believed that the liberation of slaves and religious tolerance would serve this goal, whereas witchcraft appeared as a dangerous pathway to further sedition or, even worse, the eradication of the entire humankind.

The goal of this chapter is to, firstly, provide a brief outline of the life and times of Bodin. We revisit some of the facts that we do know about his tumultuous life, but we also seek insight regarding some of the events that remain debated and to those that have shaped the narrative at some point in time, only to be debunked later on. Secondly, we discuss Bodin's key contributions to political thought. Our focus is especially on the Angevin's theory of sovereignty and on the individual components that make up this renowned concept. Thirdly and finally, we take a brief look at Bodin's place in the canon of political thought and discuss his potential significance for the students and scholars of today and tomorrow.

3.1 Bodin's Life and Times

Mystery still surrounds many key details in Bodin's life. Even the exact year of his birth (1529 or 1530) remains unknown. To complicate matters further, the author of the *République* had a somewhat common name. Many of the escapades credited to him, including accusations of heresy in his early life, may have happened to someone else with the same or a similar name. Undoubtedly, these obstacles have also contributed to the endless debate regarding Bodin's personal religious standing and the general aura of secrecy that still surrounds his legacy today.

This current outline of the life and times of Bodin is thoroughly in debt to the recent, profoundly perceptive intellectual biography by Howell A. Lloyd¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ See E. William Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft: The Case of Jean Bodin," in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E.H. Harbison*, eds. Th.K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, NJ: University Press, 1969), 371-389.

¹¹⁸ Howell A. Lloyd, *Jean Bodin: "This Pre-eminent Man of France": An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

and the insightful observations of Mario Turchetti.¹¹⁹ I have also consulted a number of other biographical accounts provided by the likes of Roger Chauviré,¹²⁰ Marie-Dominique Couzinet,¹²¹ Julian H. Franklin,¹²² Marion Leathers Kuntz,¹²³ Kenneth McRae,¹²⁴ Jonathan L. Pearl,¹²⁵ and M. J. Tooley.¹²⁶ Everything that is said here about Bodin's life and times has already been expressed by a plethora of scholars; however, I intend to make my specific sources known when it comes to contested information or particular claims and unique findings.

3.1.1 Career

There are some things that we can say about Bodin's enigmatic life. He was most likely born to the bourgeois family of master tailor Guillaume Bodin and Catherine Duterte during the second half of 1529 or the first half of 1530 (this much is known because he died in June of 1596 at the age of 66). He was probably born in the now-dissolved province of Anjou, because he would often refer to himself as Jean Bodin Angevin (a label used to describe the people of Anjou). As we have mentioned, his name was quite popular at the time; in fact, the future author was not even the sole Jean in his own family, as one of his brothers was also blessed with the same name.

In his younger years, Bodin was a novice member of the Roman Catholic religious order, the Carmelites. In 1545 he left his home to live at the order's Paris house and to study philosophy at the university. It is quite likely that he also studied at the humanist Collège de Quatres Langues (known today as the Collège de France) and was probably influenced by the French humanist Peter Ramus, whose signature method of argumentation based on deduction from general ideas toward the details is noticeable in many of Bodin's works.¹²⁷

¹¹⁹ Mario Turchetti, "Jean Bodin," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, November 13, 2019,

<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/bodin/>. See also the extensive French version by the same author: Mario Turchetti, introduction to *Les Six Livres de la République: De Republica libri sex: Livre premier – Liber I*, by Jean Bodin (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013), 31–111.

¹²⁰ Roger Chauviré, *Jean Bodin, Auteur de la "République"* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1914).

¹²¹ Marie-Dominique Couzinet, "Note biographique," in *Jean Bodin: Nature, histoire, droit et politique*, ed. Yves Charles Zarka (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 233–244.

¹²² Julian H. Franklin, introduction to *On Sovereignty: Four Chapters from The Six Books of the Commonwealth*, by Jean Bodin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ix–xxvi.

¹²³ Marion Leathers Kuntz, introduction to *Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime*, by Jean Bodin (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2008), xv–lxxxii.

¹²⁴ Kenneth McRae, "Bodin's Career," in *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, by Jean Bodin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), A 3–A 13. See also McRae's dissertation Kenneth McRae, "The Political Thought of Jean Bodin" (PhD diss., Harvard, 1953).

¹²⁵ Jonathan L. Pearl, introduction to *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, by Jean Bodin (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1995).

¹²⁶ M. J. Tooley, introduction to *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, by Jean Bodin (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1955), vii–xliii.

¹²⁷ See Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 12–14, 31; Kenneth D. McRae, "Ramist Tendencies in the Thought of Jean Bodin," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953): 306–323.

In 1548 a Carmelite called Jehan Baudin was involved in heresy trials. As a result, two other men were burned, but the said Baudin was set free. It is unsure whether this man was Jean Bodin, the author of the *République*, but some writers lean heavily on this possibility,¹²⁸ others leave the question open,¹²⁹ while some argue against it.¹³⁰ Whatever the case may be, the Carmelite order granted our Bodin a release from his friar's vows soon after the incident in 1548 or 1549. The Angevin left Paris and settled down in Toulouse, where he most likely stayed for the duration of the 1550s. While in Toulouse, Bodin studied civil law and climbed his way to a junior teacher's position. However, this was the farthest he would ever advance within the university.

During the decade in Toulouse, Bodin published his first two works. These were the 1555 translation of Oppian's poem *Cynegetica* (*On Hunting*) into Latin as *De venatione*¹³¹ and a 1559 *Oratio de instituenda in republica in iuventute ad Senatum Populumque Tolosatem* (*Address to the Senate and People of Toulouse on Education of Youth in the Commonwealth*),¹³² in which he argued for the importance of humanist education in the southern French town. There has been some speculation that Bodin did not actually spend the entirety of the 1550s in Toulouse and left to visit Geneva, the hotspot of Calvinism, in 1552 or 1553. Furthermore, it has been speculated that while staying in Geneva, Bodin might have married a widow of a reformed martyr who was killed in Paris in 1549 (this would have been possible due to him being released from his friar's vows). However, most authorities agree that it is highly unlikely or even outright impossible that the man visiting Geneva was the Angevin author of the *République*.¹³³

As the decade turned, Bodin left Toulouse and the university in order to pursue a career in law. In 1561 he became an attorney (*avocat*) in the Parliament of Paris. Meanwhile, a time of great unrest was about to start. France was faced with the deadly civil wars between the predominant Catholics and the French Calvinists, commonly known as Huguenots. Some three million people would lose their lives because of the prolonged turmoil. Due to the rising tension, attorneys in Paris were forced to sign a pledge of their Catholic faith. Two *avocats* named "Jehan Bodin" signed the document; one of these men was more than likely the Angevin author.¹³⁴

¹²⁸ Franklin, introduction to *On Sovereignty*, ix; Kuntz, introduction to *Colloquium of the Seven*, xix-xx.

¹²⁹ Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 15; McRae, "Bodin's Career," A 4.

¹³⁰ Turchetti, "Jean Bodin."

¹³¹ Oppiani, *De venatione: Libri IIII*, trans. Jean Bodin (Paris: Apud Michaëlem Vascosanum, 1555).

¹³² Jean Bodin, *Oratio de instituenda in republica in iuventute ad Senatum Populumque Tolosatem*, in *Oeuvres philosophiques de Jean Bodin*, ed. Pierre Mesnard (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951), 7-30; also available in English: Jean Bodin, *Address to the Senate and people of Toulouse on Education of Youth in the Commonwealth*, trans. George Albert Moore (Chevy Chase, MD: The Country Dollar Press, 1965).

¹³³ Letizia Fontana, "Bilan Historiographique de la question du séjour de Jean Bodin a Genève," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 71, no. 1 (2009): 101-111; See also Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 263-264; McRae, "Bodin's Career," A 4; Turchetti, "Jean Bodin."

¹³⁴ See Turchetti, "Jean Bodin."

After his return to the French capital, Bodin went on to publish his two first major works. In the 1566 *Methodus*,¹³⁵ he discusses the philosophy of history and universal law while already foreshadowing many of the themes included in his later main work, the *République*, including his first attempt to approach the question of sovereignty. In the 1568 economic work *La response de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit*,¹³⁶ Bodin participates in a then-topical debate concerning the issue of inflation. His arguments have been said to foreshadow the later quantity theory of money,¹³⁷ although this merit has also been described as somewhat gratuitous.¹³⁸

In 1569, an Angevin attorney called Jehan Baudin was arrested for over a year because of his alleged Protestant faith. Again, there is no consensus on whether this reformed prisoner was our Bodin.¹³⁹ In either case, the man in question was eventually set free after the Peace of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which permitted some rights to the adherents of the new faith. Shortly later, in 1570, our Bodin was appointed to become a commissioner charged with the reformation of the forests of Normandy. In his new position, Bodin debated that the crown ought to recover the once royal woodlands.¹⁴⁰ King Charles X would not listen and ended up renouncing his rights anyway.

Some biographers have found Bodin's rather significant appointment as likely proof of his innocence during the previous year,¹⁴¹ while others have noted that Protestants were eligible for public offices after the treaty and that there was an ongoing effort toward putting aside past grievances between the conflicting faiths.¹⁴² Whatever the case may be, the fragile peace did not last long – the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre would go on to claim the lives of thousands of Huguenots in 1572. It is uncertain where Bodin was at the time, and while thrilling stories of his narrow escape from death exist,¹⁴³ they remain largely unverified.¹⁴⁴

The following years were perhaps the most consequential in Bodin's entire life. In 1576, he published his magnum opus, the *République*,¹⁴⁵ which he would

¹³⁵ Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*.

¹³⁶ Bodin, *La response de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit*.

¹³⁷ McRae, "Bodin's Career," A 7.

¹³⁸ Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 104.

¹³⁹ Kuntz and McRae argue that the arrested man was probably our Bodin. Kuntz, introduction to *Colloquium of the Seven*, xxi; McRae, "Bodin's Career," A 7. Meanwhile Lloyd and Turchetti claim the opposite. Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 94–95; Turchetti, "Jean Bodin."

¹⁴⁰ Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 94.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 94–95.

¹⁴² McRae, "Bodin's Career," A 8.

¹⁴³ Chauviré, *Jean Bodin*, 35; Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 108.

¹⁴⁴ Turchetti, "Jean Bodin."

¹⁴⁵ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*. The majority of scholars prefer this 1583 Paris edition, which is also the basis of a French abridgement of the work edited by Gérard Mairet, which I have also consulted repeatedly in the preparation of this current work. See Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République: Un abrégé du texte de l'édition de Paris de 1583*, ed. Gérard Mairet (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1993). The only complete English translation to this date was published shortly after Bodin's death. This edition, which was devised by Richard Knolles, is based on both the French original and Bodin's own Latin translation. See, Jean Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, trans. Richard Knolles (London: Impensis G. Bishop, 1606); see also the supplemented 1962 facsimile edition by Kenneth Douglas McRae: Jean

later revise for new French editions and translate loosely into Latin.¹⁴⁶ The same year, Bodin also married Françoise Trouilliart, a daughter and widow of two other attorneys. She would later give birth to Bodin's three children. Around the same time, during 1576 and 1577, the Angevin had the opportunity to take part in the game of high politics as he became acquainted with the new King of France, Henry III, with whom he dined on multiple occasions. However, Bodin's success in the court was short-lived. While acting as a representative of the third Estate in the Estates General, the Angevin tried to argue against the unification of the conflicting faiths through force. Bodin also disagreed with the monarch's wishes to alienate parts of the domain for profit and maintained that such measures called for the accord of the people's representatives.¹⁴⁷ Bodin lost the favor of the king and that of his peers.

During the following years, 1577–1580, Bodin found another post. He was now serving under the king's younger brother, Prince Francis, Duke of Anjou, a notable *politique* (a term used to describe someone keen on the idea of preserving the political order instead of debating the details of religion). During this time, Bodin went on to publish the two versions of his work on universal law, *Iuris universi distributio*, which was released first in the form of a poster in 1578 and then as a short textual companion piece in 1580.¹⁴⁸ The same year, at the threshold of the peak of European witch hunts, he also published his most divisive work yet, a ruthless treatise, *Démonomanie*,¹⁴⁹ which called for the complete obliteration of diabolic sorcery and those who performed it. Bodin's work of "demonology," one of the most famous of its kind, may have influenced the intensity of the real-life witch hunts, although no certainty of this exists.¹⁵⁰

Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale: A Facsimile Reprint of the English Translation of 1606. Corrected and Supplemented in the Light of a New Comparison with the French and Latin Texts*, ed. Kenneth Douglas McRae, trans. Richard Knolles (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962). Two highly abridged modern translations also exist. The first is the extremely condensed 1955 translation by M. J. Tooley, which attempts to capture something from each of the six books. Jean Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, trans. M. J. Tooley (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955). The second modern translation by Julian H. Franklin takes a different approach; it isolates Bodin's theory of sovereignty and provides the translation to four key chapters, which is less than a tenth of the chapters in the original work. Jean Bodin, *On Sovereignty: Four Chapters from The Six Books of the Commonwealth*, ed. and trans. Julian H. Franklin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁴⁶ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*. The first volume of an edition containing the French and the Latin versions side by side has appeared with a preface by Quentin Skinner and an introduction by Turchetti. Jean Bodin, *Les Six Livres de la République: De Republica libri sex: Livre premier – Liber I* ed. Mario Turchetti (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013). For an analysis of Bodin's own Latin translation see Mario Turchetti, "Bodin as Self-Translator of his République: Why the Omission of 'Politicus' and Allied Terms from the Latin Version?" in *Why Concepts Matter: Translating Social and Political Thought*, eds. Martin Burke and Melvin Richter (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 109–118.

¹⁴⁷ The events of these sessions are detailed in the 1577 publication by an anonymous author, who was most likely none other than Bodin himself. See *Recueil de tout ce qui s'est négocié en la compagnie des trois Estats, assignez par le Roy en la ville de Bloys, au xv. Novembre 1576* (n.p.: n.p., 1577); see also Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 162–171.

¹⁴⁸ Jean Bodin, *Iuris universi distributio: Les trois premières éditions*, ed. Witold Wołodkiewicz (Naples: Jovene, 1986).

¹⁴⁹ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*.

¹⁵⁰ Jonathan L. Pearl, "Humanism and Satanism: Jean Bodin's Contribution to the Witchcraft Crisis," *Canadian Review of Sociology* 19, no. 4 (2008): 545–546.

Even though Bodin had failed to solidify his position in the French king's court, he had one more role left to play in the highest echelons of politics. He accompanied his patron Francis on a 1581 trip to England during which the duke attempted to woo the Virgin Queen Elizabeth I who was in her late forties, unmarried, and childless.¹⁵¹ During his stay abroad, Bodin had the chance to converse with the monarch herself. However, the author seems to have offended the queen personally while arguing fiercely for the necessity of the marriage between the two royal houses.¹⁵² The duke's attempt at courting the foreign monarch did not bear the desired result. Unfortunately, this was not the last time the duke and Bodin would face failure together.

The next year Bodin was trapped during the "French Fury," or the duke's futile surprise raid of the Flemish city of Antwerp. The Antwerpians were aware of Francis' plans of occupying their home. After being welcomed through the gates, the duke's army was suddenly trapped within the walls. Next, the Antwerpians commenced to kill virtually all the participating French troops, over 1500 men. Bodin had presented his disapproval of the raid beforehand.¹⁵³ The disgraced Francis died shortly after in 1584 at the age of 29. At the time of his death, he would have been the next in line of succession after his childless brother King Henry III. Now, the Protestant Henry of Navarre from the house of Bourbon had the claim to the throne. The militant Catholic League, which was looking to wipe out the reformed faith, would not stand for a Protestant king, and rallied in order to prevent his ascension.

Bodin had now exited high politics for good, but controversy still seemed to follow him everywhere he went. In 1587 the Angevin took over the post of *procureur du roi*, which he inherited through his wife. This assignment was situated in the Northern France town of Laon, which was under the Catholic League's control. The League was suspicious of Bodin's religious orthodoxy and challenged his position. The Angevin's home was raided because of a suspicion of heresy, but notable people and priests rushed to support him. Bodin would continue to write during his Laon years. At first, he decided to concentrate on questions regarding education and went on to publish a compilation of moral sentences credited to his then 12-year-old son Hélié, *Sapientiae moralis epitome, quae bonorum gradus ab ultimo principio ad summum hominis extremumque bonum continua serie deducit, ab Helia Bodino Jo. F. collecta. Ad Juventutem Laodunensem*.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Bodin would later support Mary Queen of Scots over Elizabeth and was perhaps aware of the so-called Babington plot to assassinate her, although there is not enough evidence to support this claim. Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 194–195; Turchetti, "Jean Bodin."

¹⁵² Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 191; See Louis de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers, *Les mémoires de Monsieur le duc de Nevers, prince de Mantoue, pair de France, gouverneur et lieutenant général pour les rois Charles IX, Henri III et Henri IV en diverses provinces de ce Royaume: Enrichi de plusieurs pièces du temps: Première Partie* (Paris: Chez Thomas Jolly, 1665), 555.

¹⁵³ See Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 191–192; Bodin's March 5 letter to Elizabeth's "spymaster" Francis Walsingham: "Elizabeth: March 1582, 1–5," in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth*, ed. Arthur John Butler, vol. 15 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1907), 510–534.

¹⁵⁴ Hélié Bodin, *Sapientiae moralis epitome, quae bonorum gradus ab ultimo principio ad summum hominis extremumque bonum continua serie deducit, ab Helia Bodino Jo. F. collecta. Ad Juventutem Laodunensem* (Paris: Apud J. Dupuys, 1588); See Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 208.

Meanwhile, the kingdom was still in turmoil. Having lost Paris, King Henry III ordered the assassination of the leaders of the increasingly powerful Catholic League in 1588. The king himself was assassinated the very next year. These murders signaled the commencement of the last phase of the deathly civil wars. Back in Laon, Bodin had had no choice but to declare his support for the League that was in command of the town. However, there were new developments on the way. In 1593 the claimant to the throne, Henry of Navarre, renounced his Protestantism. The following year he gained control of Paris and was crowned King Henry IV. He also reached Laon, where Bodin seized the opportunity to leave the town in order to join the royalist siege.

Bodin seems to have given up his ambitions regarding politics in both theory and in practice. Instead, he devoted much of his last days to the life of the mind. During his final year, he published an encyclopedic work on natural philosophy entitled *Universae naturae theatrum: in quo rerum omnium effectrices causae, & fines contemplantur, & continua series quinque libris discutiuntur*¹⁵⁵ and an accompanying work on moral philosophy called *Jo. Bodini Paradoxon, quod nec virtus ulla in mediocritate, nec summum hominis bonum in virtutis actione consistere possit*.¹⁵⁶ In 1596, just two years before the end of the civil wars, the then 66-year-old Bodin died at Laon during a plague epidemic, although his death has also been linked to some sort of mental illness.¹⁵⁷

One more work would be credited to Bodin's name posthumously:¹⁵⁸ *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis* (*Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime*).¹⁵⁹ This peculiar book depicts a conversation between seven people of varying religious backgrounds (a Catholic, a Calvinist, a Lutheran, a Jew, a convert to Islam, a skeptic, and an adherent to natural religion) who discuss religion in a way that promotes religious tolerance. The work appeared officially in 1857, but it had been in somewhat wide circulation long before its publication. There is little doubt that the posthumous *Colloquium* contributed to the already troublesome public image of Bodin and especially the discussion surrounding his personal religious standing or orthodoxy.

¹⁵⁵ Jean Bodin, *Universae naturae theatrum: in quo rerum omnium effectrices causae, & fines contemplantur, & continua series quinque libris discutiuntur* (Lyon: Apud Jacobum Roussin, 1596).

¹⁵⁶ Jean Bodin, *Jo. Bodini Paradoxon, quod nec virtus ulla in mediocritate, nec summum hominis bonum in virtutis actione consistere possit* (Paris: Denys du Val, 1596).

¹⁵⁷ See Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 239.

¹⁵⁸ Although the authenticity of the *Colloquium* has been debated, it seems to be almost certain that Bodin was the author. Noel Malcolm, "Jean Bodin and the Authorship of the 'Colloquium Heptaplomeres'." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 69 (2006): 95–150.

¹⁵⁹ Jean Bodin, *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis: E codicibus manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Academiae Gissensis cum varia lectione aliorum apographorum nunc primum typis describendum*, ed. Ludovicus Noack (Schwerin: Friedrich Wilhelm Baerensprung, 1857). For an English translation, see Jean Bodin, *Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime: Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis*, trans. Marion Leathers Kuntz (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975).

3.1.2 Faith

Bodin has been “accused” of being “a Jew, a Calvinist, a heretical Catholic, an atheist.”¹⁶⁰ Let us tackle these claims one by one, starting with the allegation that the Angevin was a secret Jew or Judaizer (a gentile who adopts Jewish customs). Bodin seems to indeed sympathize with the Jewish people, and he constantly refers to various Judaic writings.¹⁶¹ Out of the 207 citations of the Bible that appear in the *République*, a whopping 199 refer to the Old Testament.¹⁶² Furthermore, Bodin’s “view of the patriarchs of Genesis” has been described as uncommon for a Christian reader of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁶³ Meanwhile, his use of sources such as Philo has been argued to be more telling of his Platonism than anything else.¹⁶⁴ One of the key claims related to him as a secret Jew or Judaizer has to do with the now-debunked claim that his mother was secretly Jewish.¹⁶⁵ Even though there is no evidence of Bodin having any Jewish ancestry he may have had strong sympathies toward the Jewish people and could have adopted some of their customs.

There are many reasons to suspect Bodin of Calvinism, the most important of which are the alleged and confirmed accusations of heresy that he faced as well as the records that indicate that a man with his name traveled to Calvinist Geneva and married a Protestant martyr’s widow. However, it seems almost certain that this man was not the author of the *République*.¹⁶⁶ Despite rejecting this dubious Geneva affair, McRae believes enough evidence to suggest that Bodin adhered to some form of Protestantism, at least in his earlier years.¹⁶⁷ McRae cites Bodin’s supposed imprisonment due to heresy in 1569 and a certain contemporary letter claiming that the Angevin’s estate was poor because of his religious affairs.¹⁶⁸ However, Bodin’s texts do not seem to support a reading of him as a religious Huguenot because the common Calvinist tropes are absent

¹⁶⁰ Kuntz, introduction to *Colloquium of the Seven*, xxix.

¹⁶¹ For Bodin as an alleged Judaizer see especially Paul Lawrence Rose, *Bodin and the Great God of Nature: The Moral and Religious Universe of a Judaizer* (Geneva: Droz, 1980).

¹⁶² Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 123; Lloyd uses the invaluable “Bodin Sources Index,” see Kenneth D. McRae, Alistair D. McCann, and Catherine Andreadis, “Bodin Sources Index,” CURVE: Carleton University Research Virtual Environment, January 14, 2011, <https://curve.carleton.ca/eab5e4f3-f4e7-49a1-9fe5-9185bbf2527b>.

¹⁶³ Maryanne Cline Horowitz, “Bodin and Judaism,” *Il Pensiero Politico* 3, no. 2: *Jean Bodin a 400 anni dalla morte: bilancio storiografico e prospettive di ricerca* (1997): 207.

¹⁶⁴ Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 156–157.

¹⁶⁵ Lloyd claims that Chauviré is the first to note and dismiss this belief and, while doing so, he also misinterprets the rumor to refer to Bodin’s mother instead of his godmother. It is, however, Lloyd who seems to mistranslate *une marrane espagnole* to signify a Spanish godmother (*la marraine*) even though the word “*marrane*” refers to Spanish and Portuguese Jews (and Muslims) who were forced to convert to Catholicism and were only able to practice their faith in secret. Chauviré, *Jean Bodin*, 16–17; Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 264; Turchetti, “Jean Bodin.”

¹⁶⁶ Fontana, “Bilan Historiographique de la question du séjour de Jean Bodin a Genève.”

¹⁶⁷ McRae, “Bodin’s Career,” A 7–A 13.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* In a letter from Englishman William Wade to Lord Burghley written during the Estates General, “Bodinus,” a deputy of the third estate professed in civil law is describes as being “of the [new?] religion, and therefore his estate is poor, he is accounted very learned.” “Elizabeth: February 1577, 1–15,” in *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth*, ed. Allan James Crosby, vol. 15 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1880), 501–518.

from his work.¹⁶⁹ Again, this does not rule out the possibility that he may have sympathized with those of the reformed faith.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, it remains entirely possible that he adhered to Calvin's teachings at some point in his life.

Only a few things are certain – the once-Catholic novice friar lived and died at least as a nominal Catholic. He also received a Catholic burial as per his own request. However, he was also critical toward papal authority¹⁷¹ and, as we have witnessed, the orthodoxy of his Catholic faith may have been brought into question more than once. Furthermore, it has been argued quite persuasively that the personal faith of the more matured Bodin had to do with the idea of purified worship of one true God in a manner that attempted to strip religion down to its most fundamental elements.¹⁷² One more thing seems to be absolutely certain – Bodin did not show any signs of being an atheist.¹⁷³ Religion and the faith in the existence of supernatural things permeate all of his work. While his beliefs may have been eclectic, his work always remained distinctly and thoroughly religious.

3.2 Bodin's Political Thought and Sovereignty

The *Six Books of the Commonwealth* marks the transition from specifically medieval to specifically modern ways of political thinking. It at once recorded that process and assisted its accomplishment. His scholarship combined the methods of the old learning with the interests of the new. He asked new questions because he perceived new problems. He recognized the emergence of the state as the all-important and all-powerful instrument of men's fate.¹⁷⁴

Bodin was a groundbreaking political thinker who was able to move some of the emphasis away from the ruler's persona and toward the evolving idea of the state. The most significant thing that Bodin did to push political theory forward was introducing the revolutionary theory of sovereignty. He proposed this idea most famously in the first two books of his main work, the *République*, but he had already attempted to approach the issue in his earlier effort, the *Methodus*, where he provided a list of marks, or attributes, which determine sovereignty (Latin *maiestas*). More specifically, these marks were: appointing magistrates, ordering laws or revoking them, deciding on war and peace, and giving out rewards and punishments, as well as pardons.¹⁷⁵

In the *République*, Bodin both shortens his own previous list and, in a sense, also adds onto it. He now presents only one true mark of the sovereign: making laws or the act of commanding everyone in general and each person in particular.¹⁷⁶ However, this utmost essential and sole true mark of sovereignty

¹⁶⁹ Kuntz, introduction to *Colloquium of the Seven*, xx.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid; Turchetti, "Jean Bodin."

¹⁷¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.IX, 201.

¹⁷² Kuntz, introduction to *Colloquium of the Seven*, xxix-xxx; Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 114, 155-156, 251, 261; McRae, "Bodin's Career," A 13.

¹⁷³ Kuntz, introduction to *Colloquium of the Seven*, xxix.

¹⁷⁴ Tooley, introduction to *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, xxxix.

¹⁷⁵ Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, III, 29.

¹⁷⁶ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.10, 221-223.

encompasses several subordinate rights. In this new list, Bodin supplements the *Methodus* by adding prerogatives that have to do with collecting taxes and granting aids, controlling the value of money, and having vassals.¹⁷⁷ While these characteristics do not themselves constitute sovereignty, Bodin states that yielding them to anyone else would lead to its deterioration; the “rights of sovereignty should never be granted out to a subject, still less to a foreigner, for to do so is to provide a stepping-stone whereby the grantee himself becomes the sovereign.”¹⁷⁸

3.2.1 Absolute

Being sovereign comes with the right to make, alter, and remove laws. The entity that holds such power can command each and every one of their subjects through the power of legislation. However, this is simply the prerogative of the sovereign and not a part of its essential definition. In the *République*, Bodin argues that even though sovereignty is the key to understanding the fundamental basis of all commonwealths, both jurists and philosophers had failed to define this all-important concept until he himself succeeded in this demanding task. Bodin gives his most important definition of sovereignty in Chapter 8 of Book I, which begins with the now famous lines:

Sovereignty is the absolute and perpetual power of a commonwealth [*La Souveraineté est la puissance absolüe & perpetuelle d'une République*], which the Latins call *maiestas*; the Greeks *akra exousia*, *kurion arche*, and *kurion politeuma*; and the Italians *segniora*, a word they use for private persons as well as for those who have full control of the state, while the Hebrews call it *tomech shévet* – that is the highest power of command.¹⁷⁹

Let us dissect Bodin’s formulation. What exactly does it mean that sovereignty is “the absolute and perpetual power of a commonwealth?” We should begin by asking what absolute means in this context. I would like to claim that Quentin Skinner explains the notion rather flawlessly by stating that Bodin’s sovereign “is absolute in the sense that he commands but is never commanded, and so can never be lawfully opposed by any of his subjects.”¹⁸⁰ This statement means that the sovereign is under no circumstances subject to any other mortal being in the commonwealth, which, in Bodin’s own words, would translate to “the highest power of command.”¹⁸¹

The younger Bodin had a somewhat different idea about the nature of sovereign rule and absolute power. Authorities such as Skinner¹⁸² and Franklin¹⁸³ agree that the Angevin of the *Methodus* displayed a more

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 1.10, 223–234.

¹⁷⁸ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, I.10, 49 [235].

¹⁷⁹ Bodin, *On Sovereignty*, I.8, 3 [124].

¹⁸⁰ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 284–285.

¹⁸¹ Bodin, *On Sovereignty*, I.8, 3 [124].

¹⁸² Julian H. Franklin, *Jean Bodin et la naissance de la théorie absolutiste*, trans. Jean-Fabien Spitz (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993), 39.

¹⁸³ Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2:284–285.

“constitutionalist” view. Here, he wishes to provide the Estates with certain authority that cannot be overridden by the sovereign decision. In his later magnum opus, the same author opts for a stricter position, which diminishes many of the previous channels of legitimate political resistance. Skinner goes as far as to call the Bodin of the *République* a “virtually unyielding defender of absolutism.”¹⁸⁴ McRae makes similar remarks. He notes that Bodin replaces the optimism which we can still witness in the *Methodus* with a new sense of urgency, most likely due to the eruptions of civil war that took place between the releases of the two books.¹⁸⁵

Skinner calls Bodin an absolutist, but what exactly does he mean, and was Bodin ever one, even in his later years? It is important to note that we are using the concept in its political sense. This is to say that the sovereign can exist above all positive human laws but not divine or natural laws.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, Bodin’s theoretical sovereign can be regarded as both absolute (in the political sense) and not absolute (bound by the kinds of laws that mortals have no control over), depending on the viewpoint.¹⁸⁷ Again, in Bodin’s own words, sovereignty is only supposed to be understood as the “absolute ... power of a commonwealth”¹⁸⁸ This clarification is perhaps semantic and self-evident, but Bodin’s alleged turn from “constitutionalism” to “absolutism” has also been challenged for other reasons.

Yves Charles Zarka has argued that the conception of sovereignty which Bodin provides in the *République* remains partly compatible with his previous form of constitutionalism, although in a somewhat problematic manner.¹⁸⁹ Zarka explains that Bodin operates simultaneously on two levels: a theoretical and a historical one. On the one hand, the Angevin argues decidedly that sovereignty is indeed absolute, but, on the other hand, he seems to also suggest that the sovereign has to consider at least some fundamental laws that have arisen from the customs.¹⁹⁰ More specifically, Bodin maintains that the sovereign ought not and cannot repeal a law that they have sworn to preserve unless there is suitable justification for doing so.¹⁹¹ While this does not necessarily signify that the sovereign entity is commanded by one of the subjects, its power over law does seem to be limited in some secular sense.

There is yet another instance that highlights Bodin’s notion of sovereignty paradoxically as both absolute and limited: while taxation is one of the elements that make up the one true mark of the sovereign (the power to make laws), the monarch cannot levy new taxes without the consent of the Estates.¹⁹² There are, thus, several reasons why Bodin’s claimed absolute sovereignty is, in fact, not

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ McRae, “Bodin’s Career,” A 9.

¹⁸⁶ Turchetti, “Jean Bodin.”

¹⁸⁷ Richard Joyce, *Competing Sovereignties* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 52.

¹⁸⁸ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.8, 124.

¹⁸⁹ Yves Charles Zarka, “Constitution et souveraineté selon Bodin,” *Il Pensiero Politico* 3, no. 2: *Jean Bodin a 400 anni dalla morte: bilancio storiografico e prospettive di ricerca* (1997): 284.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.8, 134.

¹⁹² Ibid, 1.8, 140.

absolute even in the political sense of the word. At most, Bodin's absolutism signifies that no subject can command the sovereign directly, as has been suggested by Skinner, who is fully aware of the above-mentioned limitations attached to the absolutist reading of Bodin and agrees that the *République* still carries at least some constitutionalist features.¹⁹³ However, it is plain to see that the conception in the *République* is more unbending compared to that of the *Methodus* and, therefore, at least closer to absolutism.¹⁹⁴

Finally, even though the Bodin of the *République* displays several absolutist tendencies, attempting to link his name to the much more recent group of "absolutists" can be seen as somewhat questionable unless such claims are accompanied by the necessary disclaimers.¹⁹⁵ The theoretical turn between Bodin's two books can perhaps be described as a shift away from limited constitutionalism and toward a form of absolutism that still retains a minimal residue of constitutionalism, which, however, does not seem to fit perfectly with the rest of the theory. To summarize, Bodin's sovereign does not represent the purest form of absolutism; nevertheless, it succeeds in signifying the highest political power in the commonwealth, which does not yield to the command of its subjects. The Bodin of the *République* blocks most of the remaining outlets for legitimate political resistance, and, thus, he can be considered an absolutist in one sense of the word.

3.2.2 Perpetual

The second part of Bodin's definition is much easier to comprehend; he claims that sovereign power is perpetual. This claim runs parallel with the first part of the definition, which argued that no other people in the commonwealth could limit the sovereign's authority. Meanwhile, the second part of the definition maintains that time limits including terms of power can never bind the true status of the sovereign. In Bodin's own words, sovereignty is, thus, "not limited either in power, or in function, or in length of time."¹⁹⁶ This means that no viceroy, regent, substitute ruler, or other custodian of sovereign power can ever be understood as the veritable sovereign since their powers do not actually belong to them.¹⁹⁷ Instead, sovereignty remains ultimately with the entity that "loaned" it to the temporary authority. This logic corresponds with that of a borrowed piece of property loaned out for a specified duration of time versus another item that has been gifted away without any kind of (temporal) limitations. Only the latter of these two instances has to do with a change in legal ownership.

Bodin brings up an old saying, according to which, "the king never dies."¹⁹⁸ He interprets the proverb to signify that even when the physical body of the king

¹⁹³ Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2:2, 294–299.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ Turchetti, "Jean Bodin."

¹⁹⁶ Bodin, *On Sovereignty*, I.8, 1 [122].

¹⁹⁷ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.8, 122.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, I.8, 160. Ernst H. Kantorowicz argues famously that, like Christ, the king had two bodies – a physical body and "a body politic that 'never died.'" Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The*

does eventually perish, his sovereignty is immediately transferred to the next in line of succession.¹⁹⁹ The reason why Bodin brings up this old saying seems to be pragmatic: not having to wait until the coronation in order to recognize the new sovereign might eliminate potential power struggles incited in the vacuum left behind by the previous ruling entity. In addition, the old saying could be used in order to argue that because the king never dies, even the limited duration of human life cannot bind sovereignty.

3.2.3 Indivisible

In the first chapter of the second book, Bodin completes his definition of sovereignty. Here, he claims that sovereignty is not only absolute and perpetual but is also indivisible.²⁰⁰ Indivisibility can be understood to mean that the earthly power of the sovereign is always infinite within a certain geographical area. Even though this absolute infinity can be shared within a single entity (in the case of aristocracy and democracy), two separate infinite entities can never exist within a single commonwealth.²⁰¹ If sovereignty was to be divided between several distinct units, the commonwealth itself would need to be divided as well.

When Bodin argues for the indivisible nature of sovereignty, he also rules out the theoretical possibility of a mixed state, which had been a widely held idea ever since ancient times.²⁰² Since sovereignty cannot be divided among separate entities, it follows by the necessity of logic that there are only three possible forms of state. In the first of these conceivable forms, only one person is sovereign (monarchy – the best among the forms), in the second, the sovereignty is held by a minority consisting of two or more people (aristocracy), whereas in the third, the majority of the people are sovereign (democracy).²⁰³

When it comes to determining the form of the state, it does not matter whether the ruling entity is, for example, concerned with the common good of the people or their own personal interests. According to Bodin, there is simply no fourth possible way of distributing the highest power in the commonwealth. Issues like how much wealth the sovereign has do not matter either. In fact, all other classifications are accidental and thus more or less redundant.²⁰⁴ This includes the famous categorizations constructed by Plato and Aristotle, who claim that there are five or six possible constitutions. However, these additional divisions are not completely useless, since they have to do with another, separate question of how the state is governed. Bodin is fully aware of the fact that there

King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 506.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, II.1, 224, 266.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, I.10, 215.

²⁰² The popular notion of a mixed government has been credited to Polybius. Polybius, *Histories*, trans. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh (London: Macmillan, 1889), 6.3.

²⁰³ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, II.1, 251–252.

²⁰⁴ See Aristotle, *Politics*, in *Aristotle*, trans. H. Rackham, vol. 21 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 3.1279a–b; Plato, *Republic* 8.544e.

are infinite ways of classifying states, but only one of them matters when it comes to determining the form of its constitution.

Bodin's idea was polemical but also influential. Hobbes, who rarely cites his sources, adopts the notion of indivisibility explicitly from the Angevin.²⁰⁵ In the *Elements of Law*, Hobbes states that, "if there were a commonwealth, wherein the rights of sovereignty were divided, we must confess with Bodin, Lib. II. chap. 1. *De Republica*, that they are not rightly called commonwealths, but the corruption of commonwealths."²⁰⁶ Despite his immense influence, there are also those who believe that Bodin was mistaken to claim that sovereignty ought to be considered indivisible by nature.²⁰⁷ The central problem with the Angevin's argument seems to be that it is not focused on the necessity of there being only one entity that holds the absolute and perpetual power per se but rather on the issue echoed by Hobbes; the fact that the mark(s) of the sovereign needed to remain centralized.²⁰⁸

One does not have to look farther than the separation of powers in the United States of America in order to come up with an obvious example of the divided marks of sovereignty.²⁰⁹ However, even with the separation of powers, the US remains a democracy – the people are said to constitute a popular sovereign even though they are not directly involved in making laws or governing. According to Hobbes, this should be seen as a perversion of the state. We seem to be dealing with a large underlying question that stems from a division between sovereignty and the exercise of power, which has been highlighted by Agamben and others.²¹⁰ We address this issue further in the final chapter of this current project.

In order to save Bodin's argument on indivisibility, one would have to focus on sovereignty itself instead of its marks. In other words, we ought to emphasize that the absolute, highest power in the commonwealth cannot be held simultaneously by multiple, separate entities within a single state because the infiniteness of being absolute cannot be split without losing its infiniteness. Logic dictates that a monarchy ceases to be a monarchy when the autocrat shares supremacy with others, just as the aristocracy can no longer be considered an aristocracy when the majority seizes the supreme power from the minority. Bodin is not far from hammering this point home; as we noted earlier, he understood that the divided marks of sovereignty were a pathway to eventually losing the actual sovereign status.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ Zarka, "Constitution et souveraineté selon Bodin," 284.

²⁰⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, in *Three-Text Edition of Thomas Hobbes's Political Theory: The Elements of Law, De Cive and Leviathan*, ed. Deborah Baumgold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), II.27.7, 317.

²⁰⁷ See Franklin, *Jean Bodin et la naissance de la théorie absolutiste*, 45–56; Franklin, introduction to *On Sovereignty*, xii.

²⁰⁸ Franklin, introduction to *On Sovereignty*, xii.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ See Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government (Homo Sacer II, 2)*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa and Matteo Mandarini (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 105–107.

²¹¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.10, 235.

Perhaps the sovereign should be understood to maintain its pre-eminence in some sense even though it does not retain its monopoly to the elements that make up its one true mark. Even if the attributes of the sovereign were to be scattered in a manner that Bodin and Hobbes would consider a perversion, it would seem irrational to claim that numerous separate entities could be described as the holders of the highest, infinite, absolute, and perpetual power at the same time. Instead, it would seem logical to maintain that either one entity is sovereign, or no entity is. It took several hundreds of years until Carl Schmitt cleared up these murky waters by stating famously that the sovereign is not the one who makes the laws, but the one who has the power to suspend the rule of law altogether – according to him, the sovereign is “he who decides on the exception.”²¹²

3.3 Bodin Today and Tomorrow

Bodin is an undisputed classic in political theory; he offered the field a certain nudge it needed in order to advance into the new era. However, for one reason or another, Bodin seems to belong to the peculiar category of renowned authors, whose works are seldom read, which is rather curious considering the impact of the *République* alone. In the Anglophonic world, this can be explained partly by the fact that no full English version of his major opus has appeared since the early seventeenth century, when Richard Knolles completed his ambitious translation based on the original French text and the author’s own Latin rendition.

As Franklin has noted, the early translation by Knolles is far too archaic for the modern reader.²¹³ However, there are other, abridged translations. Tooley’s more recent, highly condensed version summarizes Bodin’s main arguments and succeeds in providing the reader with a decent overview of the work. However, as Franklin has stated, this version ends up being far too selective in order to satisfy the demands of an ambitious scholar.²¹⁴ Meanwhile, Franklin’s own translation, which consists of four key chapters on the topic of sovereignty, provides a valuable tool for those interested in the core of Bodin’s sovereignty theory, but offers very little insight to anyone studying the plethora of omitted topics (including ours). Even though all the existing English translations are inadequate for one reason or another, the modern facsimile of Knolles’ old translation accompanied with McRae’s invaluable notes and corrections provides a passable means of approaching the text in English.²¹⁵

Fortunately for the French and Latin-speaking audiences, the unabridged editions can be accessed easily via the Internet. There is even a lightly compressed and modernized French version that provides help for those struggling with Bodin’s archaic Middle French. However, there are other reasons

²¹² Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5.

²¹³ Franklin, “Note on the Text,” xxxv.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ See Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale: A Facsimile Reprint*.

why Bodin belongs to the category of seldom-read classics. Many of the excuses why the work is yet to receive its long-overdue full modern English translation also apply to the question of why modern readers are not drawn to the work in French or Latin, either. The substantial length of the book is without a doubt one of the main reasons. The 1583 Paris version comes in at well over one thousand pages without separate paragraphs or proper subheadings within its drawn-out chapters. Only a crude system of side notes brings solace to the reader trying to identify the significant arguments and sources that appear within the text.

Even though many of the notes provided in the margins consist of references, Bodin does by no means credit all of his sources. While the diversity and sheer extent of the polymath's knowledge were certainly laudable, especially for his time, he seems to be referencing his sources based on either less-than-perfect recollections or some particularly careless notes.²¹⁶ Furthermore, the Angevin is often extremely neglectful or even utterly dishonest when it comes to his sources – he seems to have been guilty of appropriating text from other writers on many occasions during his career (although there is reason to remember that this was a common practice at the time).²¹⁷

Bodin's style does not help the readability of his magnum opus, either. This is perhaps why the stream of new editions and translations ended during the latter half of the seventeenth century. As Tooley puts it, "though the book did much to bring about a revolution in political thinking, once that was accomplished it had not the literary qualities to recommend it to the general reader."²¹⁸ Bodin's typical approach, regardless of the topic, consists of providing a myriad of eclectic examples ranging from historical sources and the viewpoints of recent authorities to verbal accounts and bits of personal experience.²¹⁹ All this, combined with the book's repetitiveness and general lack of structure, renders it hard to approach for even the most devoted of modern readers.

Finally, there is one more problem when it comes to both studying and translating the *République*. It may be difficult to choose between the available French and Latin editions. One must ask, should future research and translations be based on the original French edition, one of the improved versions (such as the 1583 Paris edition), or the author's own loose Latin rendition? When it comes to translating the *République*, a comparative perspective between the different versions à la Knolles seems like the best way to go. Of course, this multiplies the already immense workload and requires the translators' mastery of all three languages. Like most studies on Bodin's political thought, this current project emphasizes the 1583 Paris edition, which is often regarded as the most excellent French version of the book. However, because the importance of the author's own augmented Latin translation cannot be overlooked, one must pay attention to the pertinent differences between the two versions, many of which have been highlighted by authorities such as McRae.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 121.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 26–28, 100, 128, 184.

²¹⁸ Tooley, Introduction to *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, xiv.

²¹⁹ Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 259.

²²⁰ See Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale: A Facsimile Reprint*.

One matter is certain despite all the problems involved in studying Bodin's political thought: whatever the future holds for political theory, the immense significance of the Angevin's contributions can never be overlooked or forgotten. One of the goals of this current work is to highlight a new reason to read Bodin's political works, which represent a link between the new and old ways of thinking. This is evident when we look at the theory of sovereignty, but as I attempt to demonstrate in the upcoming chapters, the same claim also applies to many other elements in his political thought, especially those related to the renaissance of biopolitics.

4 BODIN'S POPULATION THEORY AND POPULATIONISM

One of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of "population" as an economic and political problem: population as wealth, population as manpower or labor capacity, population balanced between its own growth and the resources it commanded. Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a "people," but with a "population," with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation.²²¹

This is how Foucault characterized the distinctly modern way of understanding life through the concept of population, which he believed to have emerged during the eighteenth century. However, it has been argued that many of the underlying problems related to the phenomenon that we know today as population had actually begun to puzzle the minds of political figures and philosophers long before the term itself took its place in the spotlight. In fact, even the recorded forms of so-called population theory (*avant la lettre*) go back over two millennia.²²² Examples of pre-modern discussions concerning issues like health, reproduction, and habitation are not hard to find. This is why Ojakangas has argued that Foucault's position is simply untenable, and that both the quantity and the quality of the population played a significant role in the political works of Plato, Aristotle, and other ancient and early modern thinkers.²²³

Foucault does recognize the fact that the mercantilist era saw some "crudely populationist arguments."²²⁴ While making this compromise, Foucault may have also alluded implicitly to Bodin and Giovanni Botero, who are certainly among the most notable early modern populationists (a designation given to those who

²²¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1:25.

²²² E. P. Hutchinson, *The Population Debate: The Development of Conflicting Theories up to 1900* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 5.

²²³ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 1-3.

²²⁴ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1:26.

were interested in maximizing the size of the population). However, according to Foucault, such arguments still lacked the intricate and distinctly modern outlooks on issues such as sex and race that dominate the population politics of today. But as we find out in the course of this study, Bodin was perhaps already much closer to these modern biopolitical themes than Foucault dared to presume.

4.1 What is Population Theory?

Foucault is without a doubt correct in the sense that population theory has become more sophisticated since antiquity and early modernity. The genealogy of population theory, or the discourse related to achieving the optimal size of a population (the number of people/citizens), should not be understood as a continuous line of progress but rather as an eclectic assortment of conflicting opinions. That being said, they are unified by their distinctive subject matter; all the thinkers that have contributed to this long-lasting debate have directed their interest toward the same two questions: firstly, what is the optimal number of people, and, secondly, how can the size of the population be manipulated toward the preferred direction? Moreover, the prominent arguments in population theory have always been made in reference to prior contributors. The case of Bodin was no different: he built his own population-political program by commending some of his predecessors (especially Emperor Augustus) while placing blame on others (Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas More).

Historically speaking, there are two opposing answers to the question regarding the size of the population: one of them argues that a large population is the key to strength and wealth, while the other claims that an excessively large population would lead to the decay and eventual ruin of the state.²²⁵ The trend has changed from one approach to the other several times throughout recorded history. The utmost obvious of such turns is probably the one that took place when the ideal of a meticulously limited Greek city-state was replaced by the diametrically opposed Roman perspective that favored the gargantuan population size of an empire that would go on to surround the entire Mediterranean Sea. For obvious reasons, the two points of view have even been labeled as the Greek and the Roman approaches.²²⁶

Another notable swing can be witnessed between Bodin's sixteenth-century populationist ideals and the famous Malthusian²²⁷ doctrine of restraint, which is often thought of as the first influential and explicit appearance of the concept of population in the field of economics.²²⁸ There are, of course, several conceivable

²²⁵ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 1.

²²⁶ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 133.

²²⁷ See Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it Affects the Future Improvement of Society with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and Other Writers* (London: J. Johnson, 1798).

²²⁸ Even though population is one of the key concepts in Foucault's oeuvre, he never discussed Malthus at length. See Mitchell Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty: Towards a Genealogy of Liberal Governance* (London: Routledge, 1991), 33; Ute Tellmann, "Catastrophic Populations

explanations for these drastic shifts; they were perhaps influenced in part by political sentiments, (supposed) trends in population size, and by whatever altered conditions or hardships were taking place at the given period of time.²²⁹

Bodin is one of the most famous thinkers to discuss population during early modernity (although he does not use the term population per se) and a forthright advocate for its largest achievable size. The Angevin debates the issue most notably in his magnum opus the *République*,²³⁰ but he had already touched on the topic tentatively in his 1566 book the *Methodus*,²³¹ and in his brief 1568 work on the topic of inflation, *La response de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit*,²³² which has an economic approach. Here, he discusses the desirability of an augmented number of people and contemplates the effects that the size of the population has on the prices in cities, among other factors including increased traffic and the migration of workers.²³³

Bodin's outlook on the effects of population size stands in stark contrast with some of the most famous ancient ideas, according to which a large population would necessarily lead to poverty and sedition.²³⁴ Bodin maintains that the exact opposite is true: increasing the number of citizens renders the commonwealth strong, wealthy, and secure.²³⁵ If the first question in the center of population theory had to do with determining the optimal number of people, we begin to approach the second question: how can the varying population-political goals be achieved? Bodin takes time to dissect a number of historical interventions used to limit or increase the number of citizens. He criticizes approaches such as birth control,²³⁶ which restricts the number of children, while exhibiting his wholehearted support for Roman-style marriage laws²³⁷ devised in order to boost legitimate reproduction. Bodin does not stop here; he goes on to include what could be described as an early program of "social policy" devised in order to nurture and educate the poor and slaves, which he wishes to see emancipated as wage laborers. According to him, this would provide health and security to the entire commonwealth. The Angevin also seems to join an ancient discussion concerning city planning based on bodily health and population politics.

Bodin's important role in early modern population theory has been acknowledged by many. Authors such as E. P. Hutchinson²³⁸ and Joseph J.

and the Fear of the Future: Malthus and the Genealogy of Liberal Economy," *Theory, Culture & Society* 30, no. 2 (2013): 136.

²²⁹ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 2–3.

²³⁰ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*.

²³¹ Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*.

²³² Bodin, *La response de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit*.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 38, 70; See also J. H. Elliot, *Europe Divided: 1559–1598* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1968), 65–66.

²³⁴ See Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1265b, 2.1270b; see also Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 13.

²³⁵ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 705–706.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, VI.2, 888.

²³⁸ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 17–18.

Spengler²³⁹ read Bodin as a populationist thinker. Ojakangas²⁴⁰ notes a lack of Early Christian discussion concerning population and that the topic experienced a long renaissance in the works of Thomas Aquinas, Ptolemy of Lucca,²⁴¹ More, Bodin, Botero, and others. These developments in population theory seem to coincide with the decrease and later resurfacing of other biopolitical ideas and practices. In a somewhat similar vein, Silvia Federici has criticized Foucault for claiming that the new kind of discourse on population and reproduction commenced during the eighteenth century even though similar ideas had already been put forward much earlier by the likes of Bodin and Botero.²⁴²

Berns, too, has noted that Bodin succeeds in highlighting the question of population in one of the first structured populationist arguments.²⁴³ According to him, Roman-style demography, the idea of population, and its preferably large size are able to enter not just the sphere of sovereignty, but also that of governing, thanks to thinkers such as Bodin and Botero.²⁴⁴ As we have mentioned before, even Foucault himself makes a slight concession during his governmentality analysis by stating that the *raison d'État* defined “an art of government in which there was an implicit reference to the population, but precisely population had not yet entered into the reflexive prism”²⁴⁵ – that is, until the concluding piece, the doctrine of “police” or public policy as exemplified by *Polizeiwissenschaft*, was finally “installed in order to make *raison d'État* function.”²⁴⁶

Not everyone agrees with this widespread populationist reading of Bodin. Yves Charbit, for example, has attempted to denounce the Angevin’s claimed (proto-)mercantilist populationism from an economist standpoint.²⁴⁷ Charbit bases this claim on the fact that Bodin’s ideas on demography can be understood exclusively in relation to his theory of sovereignty (unlike Berns has claimed).²⁴⁸ It is certainly true that Bodin’s arguments concerning the size of the population are virtually always reasoned with the desirability of accomplishing a more stable commonwealth. Whatever Bodin’s ultimate motive, there should be no doubt that he was a populationist in the simple sense that he saw the largest possible population as a source of immeasurable benefits, whether he can be labeled as a fully fledged forerunner of mercantilism or not.

In other words, it would appear that both the object of Bodin’s consideration and the desired effect, meaning the population and its greatest possible growth, were biopolitically charged issues even though they had political stability as a significant goal. Furthermore, I consider this argument to

²³⁹ Joseph J. Spengler, *French Predecessors of Malthus: A Study of Eighteenth-Century Wage and Population Theory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1942), 14–15.

²⁴⁰ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 129–133.

²⁴¹ Ptolemy, a student of Thomas, is also known as Tolomeo and Bartholomew.

²⁴² Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (New York: Autonomedia, 2005), 86.

²⁴³ Thomas Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner: Une archéologie politique de la statistique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009), 33–45.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 278.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ Yves Charbit, *The Classical Foundations of Population Thought: From Plato to Quesnay* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 43–62.

²⁴⁸ See Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 33–45.

apply even if one chooses to follow Charbit into thinking that the steadiness of the commonwealth signifies nothing but the persistence of sovereignty, which, as we will soon find out, does not seem to be an entirely accurate assessment. Bodin's argument is indeed populationist. This is a great place to commence building our upcoming biopolitical interpretation of his political thought.

This chapter aims to shine a light on Bodin's ideas related to the phenomenon of population (*avant la lettre*). Firstly, we take a very brief look at some of the most important developments in the history of population theory. We follow the accounts of Hutchinson and Ojakangas while focusing especially on the sources mentioned and criticized by Bodin. Secondly, we take a detailed look at Bodin's views on the historical ways of limiting the number of people, his own populationist argument, and the means he would use in order to achieve the desirable population-political outcome. Thirdly, we examine the methods the Angevin would employ to regulate the people, asking what are his opinions concerning the issues of the poor, slaves, and the organization of cities in order to examine the potential biopolitical significance that both his assessments and the larger population-political debate surrounding him may be argued to carry.

4.2 Historical Examples

Labeling the two contradictory approaches as Greek and Roman perspectives is helpful but not entirely accurate. In fact, we can find Greek stances that were clearly in favor of a large population size if we study the era before the Peloponnesian War.²⁴⁹ Aristotle teaches us that the Spartan model aimed to achieve the greatest possible number of offspring by providing immunity from military service and taxation for those who had produced several children.²⁵⁰ While Athens encouraged reproduction with laws and traditions, too, marriage still remained at least somewhat optional.²⁵¹ However, after the war, the great philosophers went on to display their determined support for restraining the number of citizens within the city-state. Their arguments were perhaps made in part as a response to the ongoing economic and political stress.²⁵² If we were to aim for maximal specificity we could call "the Greek approach" to population politics the Athenian post-Peloponnesian War approach, or simply that of Plato and Aristotle.

Regardless of what we choose to call this outlook, it remains characterized by strict limits on the number of citizens. In *Laws*, Plato states that the land area of the city-state needs to be extensive enough to support the population, which in return has to be numerous enough to defend itself.²⁵³ Arguing that the ideal number of citizens in the mythical *polis* that the dialogue focuses on, Magnesia,

²⁴⁹ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 10–11.

²⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1270b.

²⁵¹ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 10–11.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ Plato, *Laws* 5.737c–740b.

ought to be exactly 5040, he backs this claim up with a curious mathematical argument; 5040 has the most divisions (59) out of all the reasonable numbers that could be applied for this particular purpose. He then explains that these divisions are useful for the various contributions and distributions needed to run a political community. Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not provide a tangible number in his surviving works; however, he, too, would limit the size of the population. The Stagirite states unambiguously that “a great state is not the same thing as a state with a large population.”²⁵⁴ According to him, “the best limiting principle for a state is the largest expansion of the population, with a view to self-sufficiency that can well be taken in at one view.”²⁵⁵

There is a world of difference between the approach that Plato and Aristotle took and that of the Romans who devised laws to promote reproduction and dealt with the escalating number of people by expanding their territory.²⁵⁶ Population-political debates quietened down during the rise of Early Christianity. At first, the European²⁵⁷ Middle Ages saw virtually no such discussions, even though population growth was still occasionally thought of as a signal of God’s approval and as something that occurred in harmony with the heavenly plan.²⁵⁸ However, population theory made its triumphant return into Western discussion after the rediscovery and Latin translation of the most important ancient political works, including Plato’s *Laws*, *Republic*, and *Statesman* and Aristotle’s *Politics*.²⁵⁹

Thomas²⁶⁰ was one of the first to allude to ways of both boosting and inhibiting the population during the late Middle Ages, while his disciple Ptolemy²⁶¹ went even further by discussing some of the requirements for growing the population and the advantages of doing so. However, a considerable part of this revitalized discussion displayed a restrictive or at least mixed population-political stance. The so-called Greek approach is displayed famously by one of Bodin’s targets of criticism, More, who poses a strict population limit for the fictional island in his Platonist 1516 book *Utopia*.²⁶² Interestingly enough,

²⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Politics* 7.1326a.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.1326b.

²⁵⁶ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 14.

²⁵⁷ There were those who discussed population politics outside of Europe. Hutchinson notes that the Arab thinker Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) was one of the forerunners in post-classical population theory. *Ibid.*, 15; See Ibn Khaldun, *An Arab Philosophy of History: Selections from the Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldun of Tunis (1332–1406)*, trans. Charles Issawi (London: John Murray, 1950), V.

²⁵⁸ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 15; Spengler, *French Predecessors of Malthus*, 4–5.

²⁵⁹ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 15; Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 121–125.

²⁶⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Politics*, trans. Richard J. Reagan (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007), II.13–15, 146–164.

²⁶¹ Ptolemy of Lucca, with portions attributed to Thomas Aquinas, *On the Government of Rulers – De Regimine Principum*, trans. James M. Blythe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), IV.11.2, 246.

²⁶² According to More, each of the fifty-four identical cities across the imaginary island of Utopia ought to have six thousand households, each inhabited by ten to sixteen people. The balance is kept in check by transferring excess individuals between households, cities, and even from the island to the separate colonies on the mainland. Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Robert M. Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 43–54, 94.

More also pays much attention to other biopolitically significant issues including marriage, pregnancy, childcare, diet, city planning, hospitals, and hygiene.²⁶³

During the dawn of early modernity, the attractiveness of a large population or the so-called Roman approach was suggested briefly by thinkers such as Niccolò Machiavelli.²⁶⁴ However, the explicit and structured support for this idea was put forward most famously by Bodin, who was followed by the Italian thinker Botero just over a decade later.²⁶⁵ It has been argued that Botero drew inspiration from Bodin's magnum opus²⁶⁶ when he devised his famous argument, which already seems to foreshadow Malthus's celebrated doctrine of restraint – even though Botero believes that an augmented population is indeed favorable, the rising number of people would face an eventual limit posed by the amount of available nutrition.²⁶⁷

4.3 Pursuing the Largest Possible Population

In the first chapter of the first book of the *République*, Bodin declares that contemplation is the most dignified goal of the commonwealth, but he also states that “material things necessary to the sustenance and the defense of the subject must first be secured.”²⁶⁸ If the provision of food and other mundane matters were to be overlooked, the commonwealth would have as little chance of surviving as a person who forgets to eat and drink after being immersed entirely in the world of contemplation,²⁶⁹ similarly to what Aristotle had maintained previously.²⁷⁰ Next, Bodin moves on to discuss some of the earthly necessities that provide the foundation for any well-ordered commonwealth:

²⁶³ Ibid, 46–79.

²⁶⁴ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 16–17; See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*, in *The Historical, Political, and Diplomatic Writings of Niccolò Machiavelli*, vol. 2, trans. Christian E. Detmold (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1882), I.1; Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), X.

²⁶⁵ Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 17–19; Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 131–132.

²⁶⁶ Geoffrey Symcox, introduction to *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, by Giovanni Botero (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), xviii.

²⁶⁷ Giovanni Botero, *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, trans. Geoffrey Symcox (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012, 19; Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 17–19.

²⁶⁸ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, I.1, 5 [9]. The page numbers to the 1583 French version *Les six livres de la République* can be found bracketed.

²⁶⁹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.1, 9.

²⁷⁰ Aristotle asserts famously that one needs to satisfy the necessities of life before engaging in contemplation. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.1177a–1179a.

the commonwealth should have a territory which is large enough, and sufficiently fertile and well stocked, to feed and clothe its inhabitants. It should have a mild and equable climate, and an adequate supply of good water for health. If the geography of the country is not in itself its best defense, it should have sites capable of fortification²⁷¹

This list goes to show that even though Bodin is an outspoken champion for the maximization of the population, he is not oblivious to the fact that the surrounding area needs to be able to support the escalating number of people.²⁷² Bodin also provides another list of factors that render a commonwealth well-ordered and successful in the material sense. According to him, if a commonwealth is “well-situated [*fertile en assiete*], wealthy, populous [*fleurissante en hommes*], respected by its allies, feared by its enemies, invincible in war, impregnable, furnished with splendid buildings, and of great reputation,”²⁷³ there is no choice but to call it well-ordered.

While Bodin disputes the need to include the concept of happiness into the definition of the commonwealth (since even a well-ordered commonwealth could turn unhappy for reasons such as natural adversities or sin),²⁷⁴ he does, nevertheless, recommend monarchy instead of aristocracy or democracy later in the same book because he sees it as the best way of providing the safety (*la seureté*) and happy life of the subjects (*vie heureuse des subjects*).²⁷⁵ What is notable in the two lists is that Bodin included the flourishing populace as one of the marks of a well-ordered commonwealth, unlike many of his predecessors who would rather diminish the number of people by virtually any means necessary.

4.3.1 Bodin’s Critique

Bodin makes an explicit distinction between his realistic approach and another mode of thinking, which could be considered utopian. His plan in the *République* is to approximate the “true image of a rightly ordered commonwealth. Not that we intend to describe a purely ideal and unrealizable commonwealth such as that imagined by Plato, or Thomas More, the Chancellor of England.”²⁷⁶ Unsurprisingly, these two thinkers (accompanied by Aristotle) are also the main targets of Bodin’s criticism regarding the specifics of population theory in the *République*. He had also examined the restrictive population-political stance briefly in his earlier work, the *Methodus*. As we can see, this initial summary of the classical thinkers’ arguments contained some noticeable errors:

²⁷¹ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, I.1, 4 [6]. A very similar list is provided by Thomas. See Ptolemy, with portions attributed to Thomas, *On the Government of Rulers*, I.14.4, 96.

²⁷² In his later work, the *Theatrum*, Bodin states that the reason why people do not live as long as they did during biblical times is perhaps due to the fact that while the extended lifespan of humans was useful during the times when the land was still being populated, once this task was completed, the earth could no longer support the increased number of long-lived individuals. See Bodin, *Universae naturae theatrum*, III, 398.

²⁷³ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, I.1, 2 [4].

²⁷⁴ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.1, 4–6.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, VI.4, 965; See also Sara Miglietti, “Sovereignty, Territory, and Population in Jean Bodin’s *République*,” *French Studies* 72, no. 1 (2018): 23.

²⁷⁶ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, I.1, 2 [4].

It is true that Aristotle [sic]²⁷⁷ denied that a city state can embrace more than ten thousand citizens. Plato imposed a limit of 5,040, and on account of the factorability of the number, which has 49 divisors [sic],²⁷⁸ he preferred that abortions should take place and that they should kill not only deformed children but even normal children rather than admit more people...²⁷⁹

While criticizing these historical ways of limiting the population in his later main work, Bodin²⁸⁰ credits the idea of a maximum population of ten thousand citizens correctly to Hippodamus of Miletus, the urban planner of Piraeus, as conveyed to us by Aristotle, instead of claiming that this was one of Aristotle's own arguments.²⁸¹ Nevertheless, Bodin still continues to allege that Aristotle recommended this idea despite him never explicitly doing so.²⁸² That being said, the limitation of ten thousand citizens cannot be too far from the description of the ideal population size that Aristotle does actually provide – one that can be seen at a single glance.²⁸³ What matters here is that Aristotle's stance was, nevertheless, restrictive; he thought that the number of citizens ought to remain checked and that this limit should be enforced with the strictest imaginable measures.²⁸⁴ Bodin in the *République* also repeats Plato's wishes to limit the number of Magnesia's citizens to 5040 and his desire to utilize his "cruel law" as a way of getting rid of the surplus.²⁸⁵ As the Angevin notes, this practice was also supported by Aristotle, who stated that:

As to exposing or rearing the children born, let there be a law that no deformed child shall be reared; but on the ground of number of children, if the regular customs hinder any of those born being exposed, there must be a limit fixed to the procreation of offspring, and if any people have a child as a result of intercourse in contravention of these regulations, abortion must be practiced on it before it has developed sensation and life; for the line between lawful and unlawful abortion will be marked by the fact of having sensation and being alive.²⁸⁶

Bodin also takes time to mention a more recent example of untenable population politics: the limited number of children in More's *Utopia*, which the Angevin mistakes to be ten to sixteen per family unit, "as if he [More] could command nature."²⁸⁷ However, in actuality, More simply states that there should be ten to sixteen *people* in each household, while the number of under-aged children cannot be mandated.²⁸⁸ Even though it is not feasible to limit the number of

²⁷⁷ The limitation mentioned here is actually posed by Hippodamus of Miletus relayed to us by Aristotle. It does not necessarily reflect Aristotle's own opinion. See Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1267b.

²⁷⁸ As we learned earlier, Plato actually mentions the number 59, not 49. See Plato, *Laws* 5.737c–740b.

²⁷⁹ Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, VI, 192 [224]. Page numbers to the 1566 Latin version *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* can be found bracketed.

²⁸⁰ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 705.

²⁸¹ See Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1267b.

²⁸² Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 705.

²⁸³ Aristotle, *Politics* 7.1326b.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.1335b.

²⁸⁵ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 705.

²⁸⁶ Aristotle, *Politics* 7.1335b.

²⁸⁷ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, V.2, 159 [705–706].

²⁸⁸ More, *Utopia*, 43–44, 54.

children in this manner, the size of families and towns in More's utopian state was to be controlled meticulously. Again, what matters here is that his general population-political viewpoint remains highly reminiscent of the so-called Greek stance – he seeks to limit the number of people to a fixed amount.

More would send the excess people to separate colonies outside the island.²⁸⁹ Bodin, too, mentions colonies as a way of controlling the number of people after first condemning practices like abortion and infanticide. Even though he does not approve of limiting the population, he agrees that transporting people to the colonies is at least somewhat wiser than outright killing them.²⁹⁰ However, later in the same book, Bodin expresses his support for Roman colonies, which succeeded in killing two birds with one stone – Roman influence was spread to distant places while Rome proper was purged of some of its unwanted citizens.²⁹¹

4.3.2 Bodin's Answer

According to Bodin's famous statement in the second chapter of the fifth book of the *République*, "there is no wealth or strength other than men [*il n'y a richesse, ny force que d'hommes*]." ²⁹² Therefore, population should be seen as the ultimate political resource, which equates to prosperity and power. This is why Bodin argues that abortion, infanticide, and other ways of limiting the number of people ought to be considered imprudent; a commonwealth that is fearful of having a lot of citizens gives up its only true source of strength, prosperity, and security:

one should never be afraid of having too many subjects or too many citizens, for the strength of the commonwealth consists in men [*il n'y a richesse, ny force que d'hommes*]. Moreover, the greater the multitude of citizens, the greater check there is on factious seditions. For there will be many in an intermediate position between the rich and the poor, the good and the bad, the wise and the foolish. There is nothing more dangerous to the commonwealth than that its subjects should be divided into two factions, with none to mediate between them. This is the normal situation in a small commonwealth of few citizens.²⁹³

In *Politics*, Aristotle argues that an escalating number of people would cause a corresponding increase in poverty,²⁹⁴ which he had diagnosed as a pathway to sedition earlier in the same work.²⁹⁵ While both Aristotle and Bodin believe in the calming effect of a proportionally large "middle class," they disagree when it comes to deciding what kind of population-political approach ought to be employed to reach this common goal. Bodin argues contra Aristotle that an augmented population would not cause poverty; instead, it would give rise to a

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 43–54, 94.

²⁹⁰ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 705–706.

²⁹¹ Ibid, VI.2, 865.

²⁹² Ibid, V.2, 705–706.

²⁹³ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, V.2, 159 [705–706].

²⁹⁴ Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1270b.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 2.1265b; see Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 13.

larger intermediate body.²⁹⁶ According to him, an increased number of citizens would also help lessen sedition, rebellions, and even full-scale revolutions, instead of escalating them. Bodin claims that sedition arises from inequality and that it can be combated through amity and peace.²⁹⁷ Meanwhile, unchecked agitation would lead to the destruction of the good and the bad alike.²⁹⁸ This is to say that what is at stake is not only sovereign power or even the survival of the commonwealth, but also the lives of the people that inhabit it. Bodin addresses this issue several times in his main work. In one instance, he discusses the large intermediating body as a sort of a “social glue” that binds the two extremes together.

Revolutions tend to occur more frequently in small commonwealths than in those which are large and populous. A small commonwealth easily falls into two hostile camps. It is not so easy for such a division to appear in a large one, for there are always a number of people who are neither great nor humble, rich nor poor, good nor evil who form links between the extremes, because they have affinities with each.²⁹⁹

Religion plays a significant role in the history of population politics. The emergence of Early Christianity was accompanied by the well-known critique of birth control,³⁰⁰ which continues to resonate in some of today’s population-political discussions, especially those concerning contraception and the termination of pregnancies. It may be argued that when Bodin calls ancient practices such as abortions and infanticides cruel, he is displaying either religious or moral contempt – if not both.³⁰¹ However, this is by no means the only reason why Bodin chooses to oppose these practices. As we have witnessed earlier, the Angevin’s main argument is different; he believes that placing any restrictions on the population is foolish for explicitly political reasons.

It is also important to note that while the Christian faith is often understood as a synonym for the ideals of chastity, purity, and even outright celibacy, the Bible also includes a very different (non-political or at least pre-political) populationist message of Genesis (“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.”).³⁰² These somewhat contrasting, yet correspondingly pervasive Judeo-Christian principles of fertility and abstinence can be used to justify a variety of population-political views, as Hutchinson has observed.³⁰³ Bodin’s argument emphasizes both extremes without contradiction: he stands for chastity in family life, but he also seeks to maximize the number of births through legitimate forms of reproduction. Therefore, Bodin’s population-political standpoint is in tune with the Bible, but it is not religious (even though it may

²⁹⁶ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 706.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, IV.4, 582–583.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, IV.1, 121 [136].

³⁰⁰ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 7.

³⁰¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 705.

³⁰² Gen. 1:28 (New International Version; all subsequent citations are from this version); see Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 4–5.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

contain a distinct pious tone), because he articulates the need to augment the population with reasons such as strength, wealth, and security.

It is plain to see that Bodin's populationism aims to multiply and optimize life instead of limiting it. The largest possible population is a means of attaining more than just the obvious strength in numbers needed for military or fiscal purposes; instead, it produces a veritable plethora of benefits. The Angevin believes that achieving this goal is literally the commonwealth's sole source of strength and prosperity. Therefore, I would like to argue that Bodin sees people as the ultimate political resource. Next, we focus on some of the specific methods that he would employ in order to regulate the population and especially its size.

4.4 Regulating the Population

4.4.1 Abortion, Marriage Laws, and Immigration

After denouncing birth control (understood here in the widest sense of the word) as imprudent, Bodin turns his attention toward another ancient population-political tool. He expresses his strong support for the Roman marriage laws, *Leges Iuliae* and *Lex Papia Poppaea*, also known as the caducary laws.³⁰⁴ Bodin argues that the first Roman emperor Augustus made a wise choice to impose taxation on men who had not married after reaching the age of twenty-five³⁰⁵ and those who were married at the required age but remained childless. Augustus' carrot and stick approach seems to have been designed to tackle the rate of reproduction concurrently on two separate fronts.

To quote the historian Suetonius, Augustus "revised existing laws and enacted some new ones, for example, on extravagance, on adultery and chastity, on bribery, and on the encouragement of marriage among the various classes of citizens."³⁰⁶ Augmenting the population was certainly not the only benefit of the emperor's debated laws, which seemed to offer a wide variety of desirable results. Therefore, it is important to mention that the original and fundamental motivation behind the laws remains unknown. It has been noted that the legislation may have been devised in order to boost reproduction, to gather additional tax revenue, or to support conventional moral values.³⁰⁷ Perhaps Augustus was looking to achieve all three of these outcomes.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 18; Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, IV.2, 888.

³⁰⁵ Bodin only provides the age of twenty-five, which was the age when men were expected to have children, while the equivalent age for women was twenty.

³⁰⁶ C. Suetonius Tranquillus, *The Life of Augustus*, in *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, trans. J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 34.1. According to Suetonius and Tacitus, the original *Lex Julia de Maritandis Ordinibus* was not well received and was thus rejected, only to be supplemented later by a different law, *Lex Papia Poppaea*, which included similar themes. See also Tacitus, *The Annals*, in *The Loeb Classical Library Edition of Tacitus*, trans. J. Jackson, vol. III (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 3.25.

³⁰⁷ See Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 6.

Bodin, too, seems to believe that wise marriage laws would lead to several pleasing outcomes. However, there is no doubt that his enthusiastic support is fueled in great part by his general populationist ideas – he believes that prudent laws would help maximize the population by forcing men to seek wives and to procreate. However, providing the commonwealth with more good citizens in order to fight depopulation is not the laws' sole function for the Angevin, who is fully aware that enacting this kind of jurisdiction would bring an abundance of wealth to the treasury while also helping prevent sinful and unproductive activities such as sodomy and adultery.³⁰⁸

It may be argued that the general model of Bodin's population management is derived from Roman law and that he argues against the ideas posed by the Greek philosophers. However, just like the Greek approach to population politics, the Roman counterpart was not homogenous, either. Even though Bodin embraces Augustus' caducary laws, he criticizes later (Christian) influences, which he deems less fruitful or even downright harmful.³⁰⁹ For example, he faults the Christian Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, who placed unwise blame on the aforementioned laws, and the convert Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, who went as far as to revoke the penalties from celibates and the childless.³¹⁰ According to Bodin's reading of these historical examples, wise laws fill the commonwealth with decent folks while ill-advised ones render the commonwealth less populous and allow it to turn corrupt. He even claims that the Roman empire became depopulated, sinful, and open to attacks because the Christian Emperors Honorius and Theodosius gave away the subsidies for having children (*ius liberorum*) to all subjects.³¹¹

There is, of course, another powerful method for increasing the absolute size of the population besides augmenting birth rates and life expectancies – immigration. In his response to Malestroit's *Paradoxes*, Bodin points out that Spain benefited greatly from the migration of French workers.³¹² However, in the *Methodus*, the same author seems to argue that maximizing the population by all means necessary does not seem advisable, since having too many resident aliens may prove dangerous. Bodin provides a contemporary example from the state of Venice, which was allegedly facing a great risk of being overrun due to admitting too many foreigners to live in the city.³¹³ To sum up Bodin's ideas, it may perhaps be argued that even though immigration seems to offer lucrative opportunities, it may also prove to be perilous if left completely unchecked.

4.4.2 On the Poor and Slaves

As we have established earlier, Bodin believes, contra Aristotle, that a large population leads to decreased opposition between the different strata within the

³⁰⁸ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.2, 888.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Bodin, *La response de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit*, 38–40.

³¹³ Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, VI, 330–331.

commonwealth (such as the rich and the poor), which helps prevent dangerous sedition. Bodin also discusses the issue of poverty in another instance, in Book I, Chapter 5 of the *République*, where he states that poor people ought to be nourished rather than killed.³¹⁴ He continues by maintaining that banishing the needy from the city or leaving them unnourished would be no different than outright slaying them.³¹⁵ Furthermore, the poor ought to be fed, not only for their own sake, but also due to the fact that neglecting their needs opens the city to all sorts of popular illnesses (*maladies populaires*).³¹⁶ There is thus a wider population-political argument to be witnessed here, one that has to do with maintaining the good health of the entire city. In other words, taking care of the poor benefits everyone.

Bodin argues that all well-ordered towns ought to have public houses (*maisons publiques*) that educate poor children and provide them with an occupation, which helps prevent them from resorting to illicit activities.³¹⁷ In the Latin version of the *République*, the Angevin also addresses the closely related problem of idle people dwelling within the cities. He argues that they could either be banished or placed in public works (*publicis operibus*).³¹⁸ According to him, the city of Paris was doing an excellent job by putting the strongest of the indolent to work while feeding and healing their sick and old and providing an education for poor and fatherless children.³¹⁹ It is unsure whether banishing equates to killing here, as it does with the case of the poor.

Bodin is famous for being an early and forthright opponent of slavery. He believed that the enfranchisement of slaves would stabilize the commonwealth and that the despicable practice should be considered irrational, against God's will, and, to once again oppose Aristotle, unnatural.³²⁰ Furthermore, the Angevin went against the widely held belief according to which enslavement may have helped reduce the number of sinister individuals such as thieves and pirates. Instead, he argues that slavery increases crime because desperate people might view unlawful activities as their sole escape from a life of servitude.³²¹ Bodin also notes that history books are absolutely riddled with slave revolts and that ending the dreadful institution would stop this form of sedition once and for all. This would, in return, render the commonwealth a safer place for everyone. Therefore, Bodin's main argument is, once again, politically motivated.³²² It is worth noting that the issue of enfranchising the slaves shares many similarities with the previously mentioned problem of the impoverished. Bodin is faced with answering the question, how does one prevent newly emancipated people from

³¹⁴ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.5, 44–68.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid, I.5, 66.

³¹⁷ Ibid, I.5, 66–67.

³¹⁸ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, III.8, 361.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Aristotle believes in natural slavery. Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1254b; Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.5, 44–68.

³²¹ Ibid, I.5, 49–68.

³²² See Henry Heller, "Bodin on Slavery and Primitive Accumulation," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 53–65.

becoming idle or turning to a life of crime, like many of his predecessors and contemporary theorists had claimed?³²³ The Angevin's response is simple – according to him, all slaves should not be freed at once; instead, they ought to be taught a profession, like the poor, and then liberated little by little as wage laborers.

Bodin's approach to the issues of the poor and slaves is in line with achieving a large working population – he argues that these people ought to be taught professions and therefore integrated into the labor force. Despite his somewhat progressive opinions, Bodin was no friend of these lowly people. This is exemplified by the fact that he was by no means eager to grant newly enfranchised slaves the right to political office.³²⁴ Nevertheless, his approach does succeed in maximizing life instead of negating it. There is a plethora of biopolitically significant issues at play: the poor should not be killed or even allowed to die (banished); instead, their proper nutrition, health, and education ought to be ensured, which, in return, would help to ensure the stability and health (understood here in both the literal and figurative sense) of society at large.

4.4.3 The Organization of Cities

One of the times Foucault mentions Bodin explicitly takes place in an interview with Paul Rabinow. Here, Foucault argues that one of the key differences between how power operated in early modernity and how it does now is that books like Bodin's *République* still omitted an extended discussion on architecture that the "police literature" of the eighteenth century was already full of.³²⁵ Foucault goes on to clarify that he uses the word "architecture" here "as a function of the aims and techniques of the government of societies"³²⁶ and emphasizes that he is not arguing that pre-eighteenth century architecture was completely apolitical, but that the writers of the art of government did not usually devote entire chapters to topics like architecture or the organization of cities. He claims that there is, thus, a lack of extensive discussion on "what the order of a society should be, what a city should be, given the requirements of the maintenance of order; given that one should avoid epidemics, avoid revolts, permit a decent and moral family life, and so on."³²⁷

I would like to argue that Foucault is drawing a line in the sand. As we have witnessed before, Bodin does, in fact, take all of these issues into account in the *République*. He discusses the material requirements of a well-ordered commonwealth (its population size, the proportions of its classes, the availability of the necessities needed for survival and health, as well as the suitable location based on geography, climate, and waters). Bodin also takes time to mention the

³²³ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.5, 66–67.

³²⁴ See the supplementary chapter III.8 in the author's own Latin translation. Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, III.8, 348–365; see also Heller, "Bodin on Slavery and Primitive Accumulation," 64.

³²⁵ Michel Foucault, "Space, Knowledge and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Christian Hubert (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 239–240.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

kind of arrangements that make cities or commonwealths function and become successful in the material sense (fortifications, great buildings, public houses for the poor, the education of liberated slaves, the deterrence of crime, public works, healthcare and nourishment for the needy, etc.). He even brings up the prevention of popular diseases, which benefits everyone living in the city.

As we have already mentioned earlier, one of the key reasons why Bodin chose to support Roman-style marriage laws seems to be the fact that they are so effective in enforcing a moral family life by making more people marry and produce legitimate offspring instead of taking part in sex acts regarded as wanton and unproductive, such as adultery or sodomy. Moreover, Bodin's main work is absolutely filled with ways of preventing revolts. In fact, it may even be argued that this logic constitutes the common thread that ties all of his political works together. Interestingly enough, the Angevin connects the issue of sedition directly to that of the number of citizens. Finally, as we will find out in the next chapter, Bodin was a strong supporter of the reinstatement of the Roman magistracy of censors, which was tasked with safeguarding order and public morals while also taking care of other population-politically significant issues pertaining to the quality and the quantity of the population as well as the regulation of the private lives of families.³²⁸

When it comes to the organization of cities and architecture in a narrower sense of the word, Foucault is correct to state that there are no chapters devoted exclusively to this subject in the *République*. However, Bodin is aware of the political nature of architecture. He discusses matters such as the seditions between the people of Athens and its port until Pericles enclosed them with long walls³²⁹ and the disadvantages of building a city on the seaside or an island due to high traffic associated with a mixture of untrustworthy people and humors.³³⁰ Bodin also brings up what has been labeled the "geopolitics of the city"³³¹ when he writes about the suitable placement of the different artisan groups within towns.³³² He argues that the most frequently needed occupations should be spread around the city while some distracting groups (such as the "hammer men," *les gens de marteau*), whose services are required less habitually, ought to be placed away from the literati (*les gens de lettres & de repos*) in a separate street or section of the city.³³³

One reason why Bodin seems to be so interested in the details of city planning is that, according to him, spreading diverse groups across a larger area avoids the formation of monopolies, which in turn helps avert political dangers.³³⁴ This is by no means the only hazard of city life that the Angevin wishes to avoid. In Book III Chapter 8 added to the Latin translation of the *République*, he declares his willingness to drive certain groups out of the cities

³²⁸ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 835.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, IV.1, 537.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, V.1, 695–696.

³³¹ Berns, *Souveraineté, droit et gouvernementalité*, 170.

³³² Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, III.7, 502–503.

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

because of their corruptive and rebellious influence.³³⁵ One cannot help but draw a comparison with Plato's famous ban of poets.³³⁶ The Angevin's list of deplorable professions consists of "painters, image makers, carvers, makers and sellers of women's paintings, minstrels, players, dancers, fencers, tumblers, jesters, and bauds."³³⁷ It remains unclear whether his previously mentioned idea, according to which to banish the poor is virtually the same as to kill them is also applicable here.

Foucault's argument is also peculiar due to the fact that finding a healthy location for a city or commonwealth has been discussed ever since ancient times. This issue is clearly connected to both the organization of cities and biopolitics. For example, Plato suggests that some districts are more favorable due to their waters, winds, and soil.³³⁸ He also claims that factors such as these have a great effect on human bodies. According to Aristotle, cities should be built on a site that allows the wind to blow from the direction of the sunrise, which tends to render the inhabitants healthier.³³⁹ The Romans pay much attention to this issue as well. In his lone surviving work, *The Ten Books on Architecture* (*De architectura*),³⁴⁰ from circa 30–15 BCE, the famous architect Vitruvius advises that a city should not be built close to a swamp for health-related reasons.³⁴¹ Foucault's narrative on the emergence of biopolitics includes a very similar nineteenth-century discussion about the adverse effects of marshlands.³⁴² However, he omits ancient examples like Vitruvius. Interestingly enough, Bodin also mentions wetlands as one of the microclimates that considerably affect the nearby inhabitants.³⁴³ We return to Bodin's take on the topic in chapter six.

Thomas is one of those who bring the dormant topic of health-related city planning back to explicitly political discussions. He highlights the importance of choosing a suitable site for the kingdom. More specifically, he argues that bad regions tend to cause illness, deformity, and weakness in the body and that issues like the number of children and life expectancy are also affected by the environment.³⁴⁴ As we learned earlier, Bodin's well-ordered commonwealth is to be fertile enough to provide all the necessities of life while its climate and waters are supposed to promote good health.³⁴⁵

Since Bodin, his successors, and many of the great thinkers before him had already discussed all of the matters mentioned by Foucault, we are faced with a

³³⁵ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, III.8, 362–363.

³³⁶ Plato, *Republic* 10.607a.

³³⁷ Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, III.8, 402–403; Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, III.8, 362–363.

³³⁸ Plato, *Laws* 5.747d–e.

³³⁹ Aristotle, *Politics* 7.1330a.

³⁴⁰ Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Morris Hicky Morgan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), IV.1.

³⁴¹ However, Vitruvius' argument on why swamps had a negative effect on health has not stood the test of time. He argues that the poisonous breath of swamp creatures infused with mist was to blame. *Ibid.*

³⁴² Foucault, "Il faut défendre la société", 218.

³⁴³ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 663.

³⁴⁴ Ptolemy, with portions attributed to Thomas, *On the Government of Rulers*, II.2.1–6, 106–108.

³⁴⁵ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.1, 6.

curious problem of demarcation. In Foucault's defense, it must be stated that he does agree with the fact that architecture was indeed political long before modernity. His claim is simply that the issue was not discussed at chapter-length in the classical and early modern works of political thought such as Bodin's magnum opus. However, this assertion begs two questions: firstly, is the length of the discussion truly a suitable basis for formulating any kind of meaningful distinction, and, secondly, if it is, where should this line actually be drawn? Even though architecture and the organization of cities were not yet omnipresent in the works of early contributors to population theory, they were already undeniably present in the *République* and other classics of the genre. As we have witnessed time and time again, political philosophers have discussed architecture and city planning since antiquity and vice versa – authorities on architecture, such as Vitruvius, provide distinct population-political outlooks on the healthy placement of cities.

4.5 Bodin's Population Theory and Biopolitics

Bodin is one of the most notable thinkers to discuss the number of citizens during early modernity. Furthermore, he provides one of the first structured arguments for the benefits of unhindered legitimate reproduction and the largest possible population. Bodin's multi-faceted populationist argument is also unambiguously one of pro-natalism and anti-abortionism.³⁴⁶ He condemns birth control practices while exhibiting his support for marriage laws that penalize the childless and reward those with large families. According to him, a well-ordered and safe commonwealth should have a large population. These people should be kept nourished and healthy. Moreover, these issues should come first whenever constructing a new commonwealth.

Is Foucault then mistaken to assert that the proper emergence of the population occurred as late as the eighteenth century? I would like to argue that this is indeed the case. Just like the imagined border that separates ancient and early modern discussion on political architecture from the properly modern, this line also seems to be drawn in sand. Bodin, his contemporaries, and a number of ancient and late medieval philosophers had already posed well-thought-out population-political arguments which they used to discuss ways of manipulating the birthrate in both directions long before "police science" and its intricate methods of control began to approach their full forms.

³⁴⁶ See Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft or The Birth of Political Economy: The Case of Jean Bodin Reconsidered." Paper presented at the 42nd International Atlantic Economic Conference, Washington, D.C., October 10-13, 1996, September 1997 version) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246957308_Inflation_and_witchcraft_The_case_of_Jean_Bodin, 49. See also a condensed article version, Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger, "Birth Control: The Political-Economic Rationale behind Jean Bodin's *Démonomanie*." *History of Political Economy* 31, no. 3 (1999): 423-448.

In other words, I would like to argue that even though the modern notion of “population” was not yet used to designate this distinct cluster of ideas, including birthrates, patterns of health, habitation, etc., it seems clear that these phenomena were already being analyzed with great vigor by the great minds of political thought. That being said, I agree with Foucault that population theory has evidently taken new forms and continues to evolve as we speak. However, I would like to add that the core of the issue has remained undeniably similar throughout antiquity, early modernity, and even today. As we find out in the following chapter dedicated to the revival of the ancient magistracy of censors, Bodin’s biopolitical contributions are not limited to these direct interventions into the questions of life and the population. Instead, he goes on to foreshadow several forms of modern population politics, including but not limited to the use of statistics, “policing” the population, and regulating families as well as reproduction. He even seems to approach the most prominent build-up, or perversion, of modern biopolitics – state racism.

5 CENSORS, CENSUSES, AND BIOPOLITICS

It has been argued that Bodin was the first early modern thinker to propose a structured argument for the reinstatement of the Roman magistracy of censors.³⁴⁷ Although the idea of reviving this ancient institution seems to have been bubbling under here and there during the Late Renaissance, the Angevin succeeded in turning the issue into a legitimate talking point in the field of political science.³⁴⁸ Bodin held the magistracy in exceedingly high regard. He believed that it played a fundamental role in the success of the Roman Republic and that its abolition was a key reason behind Rome's ultimate disgrace.³⁴⁹ What did the censors do, and why were they so important in Bodin's opinion? The Roman office consisted of two elected magistrates who were charged with overseeing public morals and making censuses while also completing additional tasks related to supervising specific financial matters and public constructions.³⁵⁰ The word census, which is derived from the Latin *censere* (English: "to estimate"), signifies the periodical enumeration of the people. However, censors had much more to offer besides calculating the number of citizens; they also provided additional information regarding their names, ages, origins, and belongings.

Previous studies have linked Bodin's re-implemented version of the ancient magistracy to the Foucauldian notion of governmentality and, more specifically, the ideas of statistics and police as related to the "police science" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³⁵¹ However, Bodin's demand for the magistracy's return includes additional biopolitical aspects that are yet to receive sufficient attention; the issues we will focus on concern the biopolitically charged questions of sex and state racism. In other words, we look to elaborate on the previous

³⁴⁷ Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 69.

³⁴⁸ See Jotham Parsons, "The Roman Censors in the Renaissance Political Imagination," *History of Political Thought* 22, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 577.

³⁴⁹ Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, VI, 330–331.

³⁵⁰ Today the word "censor" is connected to examining materials that are to be published in order to suppress obscene or harmful content. This meaning of the word is still often (although not always) connected to preserving public morals. Ironically, Bodin himself was a subject to censorship in this alternative sense of the word. Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 201.

³⁵¹ See Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 13; Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 127.

literature from new perspectives in order to reinforce the idea that Bodin's censors can be interpreted as a tool of biopolitical control over both the quantity and the quality of the people.

The theory of sovereignty, Bodin's most celebrated contribution, establishes the backbone of the *République*. However, he seems to show almost equal interest in a very different understanding of power. His celebrated notion regarding absoluteness, perpetuity, and indivisibility does not signify that the monarch (or other sovereign entity) is personally behind every single political act that takes place within the borders of the commonwealth. Instead, the Angevin would bestow a great deal of power to special magistracies, such as the censors, which help the commonwealth to prosper without competing against the sovereign. When Bodin makes his appeal for the reinstatement of the ancient office in the opening chapters of the last book in his magnum opus,³⁵² he makes it abundantly clear that the powers of censors are to function outside the form of law and that he would deprive the magistracy of all legal functions. This seems to be why the distinct approaches to using power can co-exist and co-operate so fluently within his political thought.

We begin this chapter by, firstly, going through some of the previously discovered Foucauldian aspects related to Bodin's argument for the magistracy's reinstatement as discussed by authors such as Berns, Ojakangas, and Senellart. Secondly, we take a glimpse at the history of the Roman office following the illuminating study conducted by Jaakko Suolahti and the biopolitical analysis provided by Ojakangas. Thirdly, we discuss some of Bodin's key ideas concerning the early modern implementation of the magistracy. Fourthly and finally, we ask why we should consider Bodin's assertions as biopolitical. We attempt to answer this question by focusing on the link between the censors and the biopolitically charged questions of sex, the lack of a strict barrier between the private and public spheres, and driving out undesirable individuals, which serves as a clear example of state racism.

5.1 Governmentality, Statistics, and Police

Previous scholars have established a solid connection between Bodin's call for the reinstatement of censors and the Foucauldian notions of statistics and police. In *Souveraineté, droit et gouvernementalité: Lectures du politique moderne à partir de Bodin*, Berns separates two distinct ways through which Bodin approaches the functioning of power.³⁵³ The two technologies, namely sovereignty and governing, must be understood as mutually re-enforcing rather than conflicting. This division comes as no surprise for the readers of the *République*. In fact, Bodin himself makes a similar statement in the second chapter of the second book while

³⁵² Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1 ; See Michel Senellart, "Census et censura chez Bodin et Obrecht," *Il Pensiero Politico* 2 (1997): 262.

³⁵³ Berns, *Souveraineté, droit et gouvernementalité*, 133-138.

arguing that the state (*l'état*) does not equate to government (*le gouvernement*), meaning that the absolute and indivisible form of constitution, namely monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, does not predetermine the way that a state is governed per se.³⁵⁴

This means, for example, that a monarchy can be governed in an aristocratic manner if the ruler chooses to divide titles and offices in a way that benefits the elites. While doing so, the sovereign entity retains the one true mark of making laws and commanding each and every one of its subjects. This division between state and government is evoked again at the beginning of the sixth book where Bodin entrusts the censors with the task of overseeing that which is common to the commonwealth ("*ce qui est commun à la République*"),³⁵⁵ which equates to the administration of public interest, as detached from the main topic of the book, sovereign power ("*puissance souveraine*").³⁵⁶

Berns continues to examine this theme in another work, *Gouverner sans gouverner: Une archéologie politique de la statistique*,³⁵⁷ where he attempts to establish a connection between the genealogy of modern statistics³⁵⁸ and the resurfacing of the ancient censorship institution in both Bodin's magnum opus and elsewhere in Late Renaissance philosophy. According to Berns, the Bodinian take on censorship individualizes and massifies its subjects simultaneously.³⁵⁹ In other words, this complex form of governing seems to be focused on both the large-scale issues of the population and the particular secrets of individual households. The twofold structure that Berns associates with the magistracy is, of course, highly reminiscent of the Foucauldian notion of pastoral power,³⁶⁰ which is often regarded as the original root of modern biopower.

Similar issues have also been observed by other authorities. Jotham Parsons argues that the censors exercise "an almost Foucauldian surveillance."³⁶¹ Romain Descendre makes a parallel observation by claiming that their effect is virtually panopticon-like.³⁶² Berns seems to agree with these notions: the gaze of the censors forces the subjects to control themselves and become mindful of their own actions.³⁶³ It stands to reason that the censors carry a distinct disciplinary element. Furthermore, they normalize the behavior of their targets instead of

³⁵⁴ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, II.2, 272. See also Senellart's book, which focuses on the birth of this division. Michel Senellart, *Les arts de gouverner: Du regimen médiéval au concept de gouvernement* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), 32–34.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 835.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.* This distinction is highlighted further by Yves Charles Zarka. See Yves Charles Zarka, "État et gouvernement chez Bodin et les théoriciens de la raison d'État," in *Jean Bodin: Nature, histoire, droite et politique*, ed. Yves Charles Zarka (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 149–160.

³⁵⁷ Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*.

³⁵⁸ Hutchinson has also argued that Bodin's extensive support for the census foreshadows later forms of governmental statistics. Hutchinson, *The Population Debate*, 18.

³⁵⁹ Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 11–16.

³⁶⁰ See Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, 132–133.

³⁶¹ Parsons, "The Roman Censors in the Renaissance Political Imagination," 570.

³⁶² Romain Descendre, "'Connaître les hommes', 'soumettre les consciences', 'voir toute chose': Censure, vérité et raison d'État en Italie au tournant des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 70, no. 2 (2008): 11.

³⁶³ Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 86.

punishing them through legal channels. What is most notable here is once again the fact that this dynamic technique of power has nothing to do with the sphere of law and that it should thus be understood as a limited form of governing, which, as Berns notes, can be witnessed here in full effect long before the rise of modernity and liberalism.³⁶⁴

Another clear link between Bodin's thought and the Foucauldian concept of governmentality is established by the population "police" in the sense utilized by the theorists of "police science." Senellart unveils an interesting connection between the two ideas. According to him, early police scientists took cues from the Roman magistracy with direct knowledge of Bodin's magnum opus.³⁶⁵ Senellart refers to the German cameralist and police science contributor Georg Obrecht, who discusses the Roman censors as police and brings up Bodin's ideas on several occasions.³⁶⁶

Ojakangas has established another strong link between the censors and the police, both of which operated "beyond the confines of the law."³⁶⁷ Ojakangas³⁶⁸ states that Foucault's regular source on *Polizeiwissenschaft*, Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi,³⁶⁹ appeals for the reinstatement of the Roman office in his work *Der Grundriss einer Guten Regierung*, where he calls for a magistracy of moral censors (*Sittenrichter*) for his Platonist utopia. The tasks performed by the censors can be argued to establish a reference point or a prototype for the more recent, distinctly modern notion of population police. Therefore, it may even be argued that the modern conception is indebted to both the ancient magistracy and Bodin's rekindled vision.

There seems to thus be an undisputable multilayer connection between Bodin's censors and the Foucauldian notion of governmentality. However, even more comparisons remain to be made between the two Frenchmen's seemingly unlike systems of thought, some of which have already been alluded to by Ojakangas. I would like to argue that the call for censorship can be seen as a key to understanding the biopolitical vein that we are attempting to isolate from within Bodin's political philosophy. In order to grasp what censorship is about, let us take a look at the Roman model, which establishes the foundation for the Angevin's rendition of the magistracy.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Senellart, "Census et censura chez Bodin et Obrecht," 257.

³⁶⁶ Ibid; Georg Obrecht, *Fünff unterschiedliche Secreta politica von Anstellung, Erhaltung und Vermehrung guter Policy und von billicher, rechtmässiger und nothwendiger Erhöhung eines jeden Regenten jährlichen Gefällen und Einkommen* (Strasbourg: Lazarus Zetzner, 1644), IV.3, 198; See also Albion W. Small, *The Cameralists: The Pioneers of German Social Polity* (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), 56.

³⁶⁷ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 119.

³⁶⁸ Ibid, 127.

³⁶⁹ Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, *Der Grundriss einer Guten Regierung* (Frankfurt: Johann Gottlieb Garbe, 1759), 191; See also Small, *The Cameralists*, 357–361.

5.2 Roman Censors

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.³⁷⁰

The enumerations of people are not a Roman invention; instead, they had taken place long before the founding of the Republic. However, the specific magistracy of censors was indeed established in Rome in 433 BCE. Two men were elected to the office for five years, although their term was soon lowered to only eighteen months. Moreover, each pair of censors was expected to renounce their title some time before this ultimate deadline, usually after completing their central task, the census.³⁷¹ Initially, only patricians (the ruling class consisting of elite families) were eligible for the office, but the first plebeian (commoner) censor was elected quite soon, in 351 BCE.³⁷²

Censors occupied an eminent position within the Roman hierarchy; the decisions of one magistrate could only be vetoed by their own colleague, the other active censor.³⁷³ Furthermore, “the censor, unlike the judge, was not bound by any law.”³⁷⁴ The enumeration process was not taken lightly; absence without an adequate reason warranted capital punishment, at least during the institution’s early days.³⁷⁵ The office was quite long-lived; it prevailed in some capacity for approximately five hundred years, although its powers were cut drastically before being absorbed under the authority of the emperors. The end of the institution is believed to coincide with the 96 CE assassination of Emperor and Perpetual Censor Domitian.³⁷⁶

It has been argued that the census was focused mostly on fiscal matters.³⁷⁷ This claim is most likely true; however, it is important to note that effective taxation was by no means the censor’s sole objective. The enumeration of the people and the other duties vested to the magistracy seem to have had an additional, unambiguously population-political agenda. This can be witnessed, for example, in the famous formulation concerning the diverse responsibilities

³⁷⁰ Luke 2:1–6.

³⁷¹ Jaakko Suolahti, *The Roman Censors: A Study on Social Structure* (Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 1963), 26–28.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 76.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 30–36.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 30–36.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

that the censors ought to take in an idealized version of Rome as presented to us by Cicero in his work *On the Laws*.

Let the censors take a census of the people, according to age, race, family, and property. Let them have the inspection of the temples, the streets, the aqueducts, the rates, and the customs. Let them distribute the citizens, according to their tribes, fortunes, ages, and ranks. Let them keep a register of the equestrian and plebeian orders. Let them impose a tax on celibates. Let them guard the morals of the people. Let them permit no scandal in the senate.³⁷⁸

As we can see, the bulk of the responsibilities that Cicero lays upon the magistracy have to do with the regulation of the population in one sense or another. Although this may have been neither the censors' sole nor perhaps even their most pressing duty, Cicero succeeds in making their biopolitical importance blatantly apparent, especially when he makes them impose a tax on the unmarried. It is also important to note that many of the institution's fiscal responsibilities are clearly connected to explicitly population-political questions such as the rate of reproduction. The higher taxation of the childless³⁷⁹ seems to act as the perfect example of population politics and fiscal policy working together in order to achieve maximal results on both fields.

The census provides useful information (or statistics) concerning the entire population. Besides this comprehensive overview, the censors also offer additional insight regarding some of the most private details of each individual's lives in a manner that captures their "manner of life," "private life," or "entire mode of living," as Suolahti puts it.³⁸⁰ This double action³⁸¹ is highlighted even further by the moral function of the censors, who act as overseers of norms by placing individual subjects' qualities and actions under scrutiny while creating examples that enforce normativity on the larger scale of the entire population. Plutarch provides an illuminating look into the invasiveness associated with the office in *Life of Cato the Elder*, which is a part of his famous series of biographies, *Parallel Lives*.

The variety of its powers was great, including that of examining into the lives and manners of the citizens. Its creators thought that no one should be left to his own devices and desires, without inspection and review, either in his marriage, or in the begetting of his children, or in the ordering of his daily life, or in the entertainment of his friends.³⁸²

Plutarch makes it clear that even the most intimate specifics of private lives were to be controlled by the censors, whose task was to keep an eye on biopolitically

³⁷⁸ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On the Laws*, in *Treatises of M. T. Cicero*, trans. C. D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), III, 3. See Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 119.

³⁷⁹ See also Suolahti, *The Roman Censors*, 41.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 49–52.

³⁸¹ The operation of censors bears a close resemblance to the two strata of biopower (and pastoral power). Censorship totalizes and atomizes its subjects concurrently; in other words, both censorship and biopower are aimed simultaneously at individual subjects and the whole population. See Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 183–184; see also Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 11–16.

³⁸² Plutarch, *The Life of Cato the Elder*, in *The Parallel Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 16.1.

charged issues such as marriage, reproduction, and other mundane activities. The disciplinary and population-political aspects of the magistracy are so apparent that Ojakangas has gone as far as to describe Rome as a sort of a biopolitical police state.³⁸³ If the Roman censors were biopolitical, so was their reoccurrence in the Late Renaissance, when their dualistic duty of keeping an eye on both the private and the universal was made even more apparent by Bodin and the first systematized argument for the magistracy's revival, which we discuss next.

5.3 Bodin's Demand for the Reinstitution of Censorship

According to Bodin, censorship is the most necessary thing (*"la chose qui est la plus necessaire"*)³⁸⁴ for the commonwealth. Censors allow the state to flourish while their absence seems to be a pathway to various disasters. Republican Rome serves as a prime example of this. There are undoubtedly hundreds of competing explanations for both its splendor and its ultimate downfall. According to the Angevin, the answers to both of these questions have to do with the censors – they were the single most important element for Rome's success, whereas the institution's decline correlated with the eventual disgrace of the society's early glory. In the *Methodus* Bodin argues that the

office of censoring is so solemn and so necessary in the state that it appears to have contributed more definitely to the success of the Roman government than any other single factor. This was understood after the censorship had been removed, for then the splendor and majesty of the state along with the virtue of the early Romans disappeared.³⁸⁵

Thus far, we have been focusing on Rome, and even though censorship is often thought of as a Roman institution, Bodin actually believes that the magistracy had a Greek origin. He observes that the Romans imitated the Greeks on many occasions and that they also did so with the case of censors.³⁸⁶ One of the Greek examples he cites comes from the *Politics* (written after the establishment of the Roman magistracy), where Aristotle discusses the annual or, in the case of larger cities, somewhat less frequent assessment of wealth in the city-states.³⁸⁷ It is important to note that Aristotle's count seems to be related mostly, if not solely, to the appraisal of citizens' prosperity, and it is, therefore, probably not biopolitical in the same sense that Bodin's own Roman-style interpretation of censorship is.³⁸⁸

³⁸³ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 119.

³⁸⁴ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 854.

³⁸⁵ Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, VI, 277 [330–331]. Bodin also repeats this idea in his main work. Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 854.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 835.

³⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Politics* 5.1307a–b.

³⁸⁸ See Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 59.

The Angevin also mentions another example of Greek censorship. This time he refers to the *nomophylakes* or “the guardians of laws,”³⁸⁹ an Athenian magistracy that may have predated Roman censors and had the task of guaranteeing that laws were being observed. Plato’s (idealized) take on the magistracy is exceedingly disciplinary – the guardians of laws are to watch over people at all times.³⁹⁰ In any case, Bodin’s argument for the Greek origin of censorship is not entirely outlandish. As we have mentioned, the responsibilities associated with the Roman office, including the enumeration of people, were performed before the birth of the paradigmatic magistracy. Nevertheless, it stands to reason that the Angevin’s own model of population-politically charged censorship bares a closer resemblance to the more pronounced Roman system than it does to the Greek ones.

Fiscal matters play a significant role in Bodin’s argument, just like they did for the Romans (and the Greeks). However, these matters remain, once again, tied to explicitly population-political questions. Bodin argues that taxes should be distributed more equally because the extreme poverty of some and the exuberant wealth of others tend to cause sedition within the commonwealth.³⁹¹ This, of course, corresponds with the previously discussed endeavors toward the largest possible number of citizens, which the Angevin believes to have similar effects – both contribute to a large and stable “middle class” that would act as a buffer between the conflicting extremes.³⁹²

5.3.1 Policing the State

At the beginning of the sixth book of *République* Bodin shifts the focus of his inquiry away from sovereignty and toward that which is common in the commonwealth. As we learned earlier, he believes that sovereign power and governing are separate topics that need to be tackled one by one.³⁹³ This statement is the continuation of a previous assertion in the same book; according to Bodin, it “is important that a clear distinction be made between the form of the state, and the form of the government, which is merely the machinery of policing the state [*une reigle de police*], though no one has yet considered it in that light.”³⁹⁴ Censors deal with matters pertaining to the “common interest,”³⁹⁵ a category that includes “the administration of the revenue, the domain, rents, revenues, taxes, or imposts and other such charges necessary for the maintenance of the commonwealth.”³⁹⁶ These questions are more or less unrelated to the person of the ruler and the laws that they choose to promulgate.

Law, the one true mark of sovereignty, cannot constitute a healthy commonwealth alone, because the most despicable vices tend to always escape

³⁸⁹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 849.

³⁹⁰ Plato, *Laws* 7.822d; See Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 78.

³⁹¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 841–842.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, V.2, 704–706.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 835.

³⁹⁴ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, II.2, 56 [272].

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 181 [835].

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

its grasp.³⁹⁷ This unfavorable state of affairs needs to be combated by other means – Bodin’s nimble censors govern their targets from outside the matrix of law and sovereignty.³⁹⁸ According to the Angevin, the magistrates should not have any kind of juridic powers because “their activities should not be encumbered by excessive legal proceedings [*enveloppee de proces & de chiquaneries*].”³⁹⁹ Censors reject the sword and the gavel in favor of a different set of equally powerful tools – all that they require in order to stir great unease in misbehaving citizens is “a word, a look, a stroke of the pen.”⁴⁰⁰ Bodin states that this suggestive power alone is so immense that if censors were granted legislative powers, they would undoubtedly become tyrants.⁴⁰¹

Just like the Roman magistracy, Bodin’s re-interpretation can be broken down into two distinct levels.⁴⁰² The first involves gathering large-scale statistics about citizens and conducting them toward a desired norm, while the other has to do with private matters of the household and adjusting individual subjects with an inquisitive gaze. These two effects seem to once again take place concurrently and without hindering one another in any shape or form.

If the necessity of their function is evident, even more so is its utility, both in establishing the number and quality of persons, and the amount and character of each individual’s possessions, but also as a means of disciplining and reprimanding [*reigler & morigerer*] the subject. It astonishes me that so excellent an institution, at once so necessary and useful to the commonwealth, should have been allowed to lapse, seeing that in ancient times all Greek and Latin communities knew it.⁴⁰³

Both the approaches come with multiple benefits. The global level that regards “the number and quality of persons”⁴⁰⁴ is used to keep track of the people in the commonwealth, which makes it possible to know, for example, how many people can be enlisted into the army or sent to the colonies at any given time.⁴⁰⁵ It also helps with the precise distribution of the necessities of life⁴⁰⁶ and the education of the young, who are “tender plants, and must be raised with great care.”⁴⁰⁷ None of these issues can be appropriately handled if one does not pay sufficient attention to the quantity and quality of the people.

The second level of “disciplining and reprimanding the subject”⁴⁰⁸ has to do especially with “undesirable” people such as thieves and vagrants who are said to prey on the good folk like wolves amongst the sheep.⁴⁰⁹ However, only

³⁹⁷ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 846.

³⁹⁸ See Berns, *Souveraineté, droit et gouvernementalité*, 212–213.

³⁹⁹ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, VI.1, 184 [849].

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 850.

⁴⁰² Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 16; See Magali Besonne, “The Eye of the Censor: A Critical Genealogy of Censorship as Transparency (16th–18th Centuries),” *Revue Lisa* 11, no. 1, 2013, <http://journals.openedition.org/lisa/5154>.

⁴⁰³ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, VI.1, 181 [835].

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁷ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 847.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 835.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 840–841.

malicious individuals need to be scared of the bright light that the censor shines upon their shady deeds, while decent people are only glad to reveal their innocent affairs.⁴¹⁰ It may be argued that Bodin sees censorship as a profoundly important, multi-faceted tool for controlling the people. The commonwealth cannot function properly without the magistracy – its welfare relies on it.⁴¹¹

One of the censors' useful tasks is related to immigration. As we learned in the previous chapter, Bodin states that a "countless multitude of foreigners and resident aliens"⁴¹² lived in Venice. According to him, these foreigners posed a direct risk to the security of the city. Furthermore, he argues that this problem has its roots in the fact that the Venetians made the unwise decision to not elect censors, unlike the Romans and later "the men of Lucca and the Genoese also."⁴¹³ Based on Bodin's concise argument, it would appear that the censors provide a way of preventing hostile takeovers resulting from unchecked immigration and the lopsided composition of the population.

5.3.2 Alternative Approaches

It has to be mentioned that the *République* does not give us the full story when it comes to Bodin's views regarding censorship. Despite being so favorable toward the enumeration of people in his main work, the Angevin has something very different to say in some of the later editions of his previous work, the *Methodus*. Here, he still seems to still be greatly in favor of the censors, yet he advises against their most defining task, the census. He gives two interesting explanations: firstly, the famous biblical prohibition of enumeration in 2 Samuel 24.⁴¹⁴ Secondly, he argues that the census could carry concrete political risks; foreigners and poor people might be able to become aware of their large numbers, which would be a pathway to sedition.⁴¹⁵ Bodin compares this risk to Seneca's warning about the dangers of having slaves and freemen wear distinct clothing, allowing disenfranchised people to become conscious of how many of them there are compared to their masters.⁴¹⁶

The true reasoning behind Bodin's adjustment remains unclear, but it highlights the vast power of the censors and the census. Even more importantly, it succeeds in emphasizing the explosive potential that population-political knowledge could carry if it was ever placed in the wrong hands. This part of Bodin's thought may be connected to the *raison d'État* (the reason of state) or, more specifically, the *arcana imperii* (secrets of the state, which Foucault describes

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, VI.1, 843.

⁴¹¹ Ibid, VI.1, 845.

⁴¹² Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, VI, 277–278 [330–331].

⁴¹³ Ibid; Bodin's claim that Genoa and Lucca had censors while Venice did not is historically incorrect. See Parsons, "The Roman Censors in the Renaissance Political Imagination," 577.

⁴¹⁴ The biblical prohibition of censuses cast a long shadow on discussions concerning the topic. See Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 131.

⁴¹⁵ These additions appeared during Bodin's own lifetime, and they are included in Beatrice Reynold's translation, which is based on the 1583 edition of the book. See Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, VI, 278.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid; L. Annaeus Seneca, *On Clemency*, Book I, in *Minor Dialogs Together with the Dialog "On Clemency"*, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London: George Bell and Sons, 1900), XXIV.

as “secrets of power not to be divulged”).⁴¹⁷ This concept, made famous by Tacitus,⁴¹⁸ was reintroduced to the early modern world by none other than Bodin and his *Methodus*.⁴¹⁹ However, it has been noted that Bodin’s censors are not the most typical example of the restrictive *raison d’État*, at least in the sense that Foucault understands the concept. The Angevin’s intricate regulation succeeds in restraining itself from governing too much since it does not have legislative powers.⁴²⁰ Instead, censorship seems to be more reminiscent of the distinctly modern ways of governing “just enough.”

The task of caring for everything that is common in the commonwealth does not need to be managed by the censors alone. As Bodin notes in the *Methodus*, there were officials in Athens, Rome, and Venice whose task was to oversee public health, food, and water supplies.⁴²¹ Specific matters like wine, shops, women, and wrestling schools were also supervised, while orphans and widows had their own custodians.⁴²² Bodin continues to stress the prominence of public issues such as these in his main work, where he mentions the great importance of provisions, public health, and the cleansing of cities.⁴²³

Bodin argues that there ought to be intermediary institutions that occupy the space between families and the state because they help preserve the amity within the commonwealth while deterring incitement toward rebellious sedition.⁴²⁴ Originally, the different kinds of “fraternities, guilds, and communities”⁴²⁵ had yet another reason to exist; they were established to render the members of the political body toward a more harmonious state, which made it “easier to regulate the commonwealth as a whole.”⁴²⁶ Not only do these associations co-exist with the crown, but they also help the sovereign entity achieve its own specific goals. They are thus allowed to subject their members to policing and discipline at least as long as they do not begin to compete with the monarch.

One can say that all corporate associations and guilds are instituted for the purpose of religion; or police [*la police*], which includes the administration of justice and the distribution of obligations; or to regulate the food supply and the merchants who handle it, and the crafts necessary to the commonwealth; or for discipline [*ou pour l’institution & discipline*].⁴²⁷

⁴¹⁷ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 275.

⁴¹⁸ See Tacitus, *The Annals*, 1.6.

⁴¹⁹ Michel Senellart, ed., *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, by Michel Foucault, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2007), 283, n. 63; Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, IV, 70.

⁴²⁰ Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 153.

⁴²¹ Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, VI, 232.

⁴²² *Ibid.*

⁴²³ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, III.3, 406.

⁴²⁴ See Berns, *Souveraineté, droit et gouvernementalité*, 168–170.

⁴²⁵ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, III.7, 98 [476].

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, III.7, 99 [478].

5.4 Censorship as a Biopolitical Tool

As the prevailing literature has established, the tasks of the censors can be viewed through the lens of governmentality. This cannot be described as a long leap, since Foucault ⁴²⁸ himself had already connected some of modern governmentality's first steps to Bodin's predecessor and frequent target of antagonism, Machiavelli, who incidentally brings up the topic of censors briefly in his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*.⁴²⁹ What we hope to accomplish in this chapter is to read Bodin's demand for the reinstatement of censorship against the backdrop of Foucault's other, closely related analysis of biopolitics, which focuses on issues such as sex and state racism that are much less present (if not entirely forgotten) in his governmentality analysis.

Ojakangas has gotten the closest to grasping these biopolitical themes in a pre-modern context. Besides detailing their Greek and Roman manifestations, he has also sketched an invaluable outline for their late medieval and early modern revival. Furthermore, he includes a brief biopolitical reading of Bodin's political thought and his demand for the reinstatement of censors.⁴³⁰ Even though he does mention biopolitically charged issues such as the regulation of reproduction and the quality of the people, there is still much that we can learn through this ongoing close reading of Book VI, Chapter 1 of the *République*.

5.4.1 Marriage and Reproduction

The first biopolitically charged aspect in Bodin's texts on censorship that I would like to address has to do with the interconnected questions of reproduction, marriage, sex, prostitution, birth control, and infanticide. According to Bodin, these issues are in desperate need of regulation since the father's virtually sovereign-like power over the lives of other family members had diminished over time.⁴³¹ Because the ancient *patria potestas* could no longer be exercised in its fullest form, the orderly conduct of households needed to be ensured by another authority – the reinstated magistracy of censors. As we have gathered previously, Bodin assigns the Roman-style office to handle some of the utmost private matters pertaining to people's personal lives – this is certainly one of them.

In their bold analysis of Bodin's thought and the allegedly interrelated topics of witchcraft, birth control, and pro-natalism, Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger⁴³² note that the Angevin's take on the censors in the original French version of the *République* includes an argument for facilitating marriage, which

⁴²⁸ Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, 93.

⁴²⁹ Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*, I.49. These brief comments do not threaten Bodin's status as the one to make the first structured argument for the institution's revival.

⁴³⁰ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 132–133.

⁴³¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 846.

⁴³² Heinsohn and Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft." We discuss Bodin's demonology further in chapter seven.

also decreases prostitution.⁴³³ Furthermore, they note that the Angevin's own Latin version includes another, even more intriguing idea of limiting abortions, infanticides, and exposing of children.⁴³⁴ Here, the Angevin states that only censors can prevent maidens from being prostituted (*prostituuntur*) instead of getting married, as he does in the French version, but he also states that censors are the sole influence that can stop them from exposing (*exponere*) or killing (*necare*) their children. Securing marriages for the young women and, moreover, allowing them to produce the maximal number of legitimate offspring are thus some of the explicit objectives that Bodin assigns to the censors.⁴³⁵ The comparison between this task and the Foucauldian conception of biopolitics writes itself, even though Heinsohn and Steiger do not mention it explicitly.

The anti-abortionist pro-natalist task of the censors coincides perfectly with Bodin's maximalist population-political stance and his support for Augustus's strict and controversial marriage laws, which the Angevin would employ in order to achieve a desirable populationist effect.⁴³⁶ Bodin is a strong proponent of controlling marriage through legislative means, but he does not seem to think that laws alone are enough. As he argues elsewhere, the censors are needed in order to catch the most despicable cases of corruption, which were always escaping the long yet restricted arm of the law.⁴³⁷ As we can clearly see, some of these issues residing just outside the sovereign's reach have to do with the biopolitically charged question of reproduction. Furthermore, this "private" question seems to be an explicitly political issue for the Angevin.

Again, the "ill-regulated relations of married people"⁴³⁸ appear to result from the dilution of the father's ancient authority. Even though Bodin supports the return of *patria potestas*,⁴³⁹ he opts for another way of dealing with the problems of the households. He wishes to control the conduct of families through censorship.⁴⁴⁰ This solution provides an effective way of controlling the so-called private sphere. Bodin's censorship is censorship of life; firstly, it allows for the maximization of life instead of negating it and, secondly, its operation is related to the utmost minute details of its subjects' lives, which is highlighted by his explicit focus on controlling people's sexual behavior and reproduction. Whether we choose to understand this shift primarily as the question of life entering into politics or, vice versa, as politics intervening into the question of life, Bodin's work seems to provide ample evidence for the collision of these two worlds.

⁴³³ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 846–847.

⁴³⁴ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, VI.I, 631. This part is also included in Knolles' early English translation that draws from both the French and the Latin versions. Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, VI.I, 644.

⁴³⁵ See Heinsohn and Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 49–50.

⁴³⁶ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.2, 888.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 846. Foucault has a similar idea concerning the ineffective nature of sovereignty. See Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended", 243.

⁴³⁸ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, VI.1, 183 [846].

⁴³⁹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.4, 32.

⁴⁴⁰ Foucault has argued that the *patria potestas* can be seen as an early foundation of sovereign power and, furthermore, that the shift away from the realm of laws to that of norms establishes one of the main differences between sovereign power and biopower. See Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 177.

5.4.2 Politics and Economics

Some of the most pivotal thinkers to analyze biopolitics have argued that the emergence of modern biopolitics coincides and correlates with the simultaneous blurring of the ancient division between the so-called private and public spheres of *oikos* and *polis*.⁴⁴¹ As we witnessed with the cases of reproduction and marriage, both Bodin's censors and their ancient counterpart signal a breach between these two realms – censorship is clearly connected to the utmost secretive affairs of concrete life.⁴⁴² Bodin discusses the issue quite explicitly. While he agrees with Aristotle that it is not the subject but the household that establishes the base upon which the commonwealth rests,⁴⁴³ he clashes with the Stagirite's well-known division between economy or household management (*l'œconomie*) and political governing (*police*),⁴⁴⁴ stating that there is no good reason to separate the two.⁴⁴⁵

This means that household issues are not detached from the realm of political government by a hard barrier; instead, the economy ought to be understood as an urgent political issue that is too important to be left to private discretion. This is highlighted by Bodin's obvious statement that the entirety of the human race would perish without marriage and repopulation.⁴⁴⁶ However, to say that the governing of private and the public spheres was to be handled similarly does not mean that there was no difference between the two spheres. There is, for example, an all-important distinction between the privately owned (*le propre*) and the common (*le commun*) when it comes to property (to which Bodin includes the question concerning the possession of wives). This division provides the basis for both families and commonwealths.⁴⁴⁷ What Bodin means is simply that the way that family life ought to be governed does not differ from matters of public policy. This idea can be witnessed further with the education of children, which is yet another issue that has been neglected in a world without censors:

What should be a matter of public policy [*ce qui devoit estre public*] is now left to each individual's private discretion, and each does as he chooses, one one thing and one another ... All these things should depend on the care and attention of censors, whose first concern should be to provide for the education of the young, and teachers for this purpose.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴¹ This is especially true in the case of Hannah Arendt. Agamben has drawn a famous connection between her and Foucault's analyses. See Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 3–4; Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 24.

⁴⁴² See Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 116.

⁴⁴³ Aristotle, *Politics* 3.1253b2; Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.2, 10; Tooley, introduction to *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, xxiii.

⁴⁴⁴ For further discussion regarding Bodin's use of these concepts, see Anna Becker, "Jean Bodin on Oeconomics and Politics," *History of European Ideas* 40, no. 2 (2014), 135–153. See also Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 112–113.

⁴⁴⁵ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.2, 10.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I.2, 11.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, I.2, 15.

⁴⁴⁸ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, VI.1, 182 [847].

The Angevin sets concrete everyday life irreversibly into the matrix of politics. In other words, the political spotlight is given to the private life of the *oikos*, which would soon become understood as biological life and the target of all (bio)politics. This allows us to approach the notions of politics and life in the way that they are still understood today – as linked poles without a metaphysical barrier between them. It could be argued that this establishes one of the most important definitions of the notion of biopolitics.

Although there is, of course, a difference between *oikos* and *polis*, it would appear that the concepts of politics and economics were not always as sealed as Aristotle's famous passage from the beginning of *Politics*⁴⁴⁹ seems to suggest. Agamben has argued that these two vocabularies have remained subject to "mutual contamination" since the Hellenistic period.⁴⁵⁰ Ojakangas provides additional evidence that similar contamination dates back further to the classical era (whereas the separation actually became more pronounced during the Hellenistic era).⁴⁵¹ In light of these arguments, we can see that Bodin's argument is not a radical appeal to organize the political field differently in a manner that no longer closes the private sphere off from politics, but simply a statement of facts – the economic and the political were, in fact, already connected in some sense.

It would be a mistake to understand the two categories as purely autonomous spheres. Even Xenophon, whom Bodin mistakenly accuses of making the same distinction as Aristotle, has his rendition of Socrates state that the difference between managing private and public affairs is only a difference in quantity.⁴⁵² To conclude, the blurring of the two realms does not seem to be a modern occurrence; instead, the connection they share is age-old. Furthermore, such a finding can be interpreted as a testament to ancient and early modern biopolitical ideas and practices. As Paul Cartledge has stated, "In contemporary Anglo-American culture 'The personal is the political' can be a counter-cultural, radical, even revolutionary slogan. For the Greeks, however, it would merely have been a banal statement of the obvious."⁴⁵³ The same seems to apply to Bodin.

5.4.3 Getting Rid of Parasites

As we have learned previously, Foucault uses the concept of state racism to describe the rationality that a biopolitical state follows in order to purge its own population of undesirable elements. Despite its name, this twisted logic is not necessarily limited to the modern ideas of biological "race" and its alleged

⁴⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Politics* 1.1252a.

⁴⁵⁰ Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 24.

⁴⁵¹ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 52; see also Mika Ojakangas, "Polis and Oikos: The Art of Politics in the Greek City State," *European Legacy: Towards New Paradigms* 25, no. 4 (2020): 404–420.

⁴⁵² Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.2, 10; Xenophon, *The Memorabilia or, Recollections of Socrates* (London: Macmillan, 1897), III.4.12; See Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 50–51.

⁴⁵³ Paul Cartledge, *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 18.

“purity”; instead, the notion can be employed to signify a much wider range of interventions – the elimination of all kinds of “degenerates” and abnormal individuals that hinder the proliferation of the population as a whole.⁴⁵⁴ In Foucault’s own words, state racism aims to remove any “threats, either external or internal, to the population and for the population.”⁴⁵⁵ During his 1975–1976 lectures at the Collège de France, he summed up the logic of state racism as follows:

‘The more inferior species die out, the more abnormal individuals are eliminated, the fewer degenerates there will be in the species as a whole, and the more I – as species rather than individual – can live, the stronger I will be, the more vigorous I will be. I will be able to proliferate.’⁴⁵⁶

Bodin employs a very similar logic when he equates purging the commonwealth of harmful elements to the purgations performed on the sick human body. He states that even though sedition is inherently unwelcome, it produces at least some desirable results – the most vicious people tend to get killed or banished, allowing the rest of the population to prosper in peace.⁴⁵⁷ Even though no one should wish for sedition or sickness, both of these adversities can lead to a welcome outcome as the (political) body is healed through much required purification.⁴⁵⁸

In another instance, Bodin seems to imply that both the commonwealth and the human body ought to be cleansed periodically and not only during a crisis if one wishes to prevent them from falling ill like Rome did when censors were not elected.⁴⁵⁹ Bodin states that “any time they omitted the censorship, as occasionally happened during a long war, one can see at a glance how the morals of the people declined, and the commonwealth fell sick like a body denied its customary purgations.”⁴⁶⁰ Censorship is thus a medical instrument that must be applied regularly if one wishes to remove parasites from the political body and ensure the wellbeing of the commonwealth at large. According to Bodin, censors should direct their gaze especially toward the disagreeable parts of the population, which is comprised of corruptive low lives such as vagrants and thieves who hide amongst well-behaved citizens like disguised predators:

one of the most important good consequences of numbering the people is that one can find out the standing and the calling of each individual, and how he earns his living. This makes it possible to get rid [*chasser*] of those parasites which prey upon the commonwealth [*mouches guespes, qui mangent le miel des abeilles*], to banish [*bannir*] idlers and vagabonds, the robbers and ruffians of all sorts that live among good citizens like

⁴⁵⁴ Foucault, “*Il faut défendre la société*”, 228.

⁴⁵⁵ Foucault “*Society Must Be Defended*”, 256.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 255.

⁴⁵⁷ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, IV.7, 639.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid*.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid*, VI.1, 846.

⁴⁶⁰ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, VI.1, 182 [846].

wolves among the sheep. One can find them out, and track them down wherever they are.⁴⁶¹

Bodin continues by stating that these predatory or parasitic individuals, which he also refers to as “vermin” (*vermine*), should be identified and removed from the commonwealth in order to prevent them from degrading the rest of the populace, which consists in great part of good or at least decent citizens.⁴⁶² The Angevin goes on to argue once again that law is virtually powerless against many corruptive elements and that there is no other way of eradicating them except through censorship:

drunkenness, gambling, fornication, and lust can be indulged in without check from the law. Who can remedy this state of things but the censor? One sees also how most commonwealths are afflicted with vagabonds, idlers, and ruffians who corrupt good citizens by their deeds and their example. There is no means of getting rid of such vermin [*chasser ceste vermine*] save by the censor.⁴⁶³

One concrete way of controlling the quality of the population or hindering its degeneration is to send the undesirable subjects to colonies so they can no longer corrupt the good citizens. This is yet another task for the censors, who are charged with determining how many people can be sent out at any given time.⁴⁶⁴ As we hinted in the previous chapter, Bodin commends the habit of transporting unwanted individuals to the colonies because this takes care of two pressing problems at once.⁴⁶⁵ He states that Romans were able to become unencumbered by the despicable elements of the population by getting “rid of the indigent, disorderly, and idle elements among their own people.”⁴⁶⁶ Even though those in charge made an intentional choice to not send their best individuals, they still managed to spread their influence across the subjugated areas because the ensuing “intermarriage bred mutual trust, so that the conquered came to submit to Rome willingly.”⁴⁶⁷ It is important to note that this example of controlling the quality of the population proves that Bodin’s wish to “get rid of” undesirable subjects was not limited to a metaphorical sense and that it signaled, at the very least, some form of literal expulsion.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, VI.1, 181–182 [840–841]. Ojakangas mentions Bodin’s desire to drive out parasitic people briefly in his own biopolitical analysis. Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 132–133.

⁴⁶² Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 846.

⁴⁶³ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, VI.1, 190 [846].

⁴⁶⁴ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 830–840.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, VI.2, 865.

⁴⁶⁶ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, VI.2, 187 [865].

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ The true meaning behind Bodin’s notion of “getting rid of” (*chasser*) remains ambiguous. However, it is important to note that state racism is not limited to actual killing but, as Foucault himself states, the concept includes “also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on.” Therefore, Foucault’s definition accommodates Bodin’s hunt for undesirables, whether they are killed, banished, or rejected in some other sense. Bodin’s idea is to remove internal threats to the commonwealth and its people; he wishes to literally purge the commonwealth of undesirable parasites in order to ensure a peaceful existence for the rest of the people. This move is highly reminiscent of Foucault’s description of biopolitics – the revitalization of censorship seems to be aimed

Bodin's censors have several other, less drastic but equally interesting, effects on the quality of the population. As we have gathered from previous examples, the Angevin's conception of the ideal population could be described as harmonized, unpolarized, and homogenized. According to him, more people ought to belong to a large and secure "middle class."⁴⁶⁹ The censors facilitate this goal by acting as keepers of public morals tasked with conducting the behavior of the population toward a preferred, normalized mode. Even the explicitly fiscal element of the censors' duty has a normalizing population-political outcome; as we learned earlier, the magistracy is supposed to help prevent disharmony between the excessively rich and poor by making taxation more equal.⁴⁷⁰ It can be argued that political harmony is a major key to grasping Bodin's political thought, and normalization plays a major role in achieving this objective.

One of the characteristics we can associate with Bodin's "ideal citizen" is activity. The Angevin is eager to remove all kinds of idleness from the commonwealth.⁴⁷¹ However, it is often possible to act in a parasitic manner without breaking the laws or being caught doing so. This is why such individuals are not targeted primarily by legislative means but rather by norms and normalization. The censors set a precedent for how the good subject ought to act in contrast to undesirable idlers. This counterexample of an active citizen has been argued to establish an early idea of work ethic.⁴⁷² The remodeled notion of censors can thus be regarded as one of the stepping stones toward "the spirit of capitalism."⁴⁷³

5.5 Censorship, Governmentality, and Biopolitics

There are several reasons why Bodin's demand for the revitalization of the ancient magistracy can be understood as a biopolitical initiative. Firstly, censors are to have a direct role in overseeing the biopolitically charged issues of marriage and childbirth. In other words, they have clear natalist and anti-abortionist responsibilities, which align perfectly with the populationism witnessed elsewhere in the *République*. The second issue is connected to the first one; censorship seems to signal an unambiguous breach of the contested barrier

toward making the population as large as possible while also making it more vigorous and less affected by sickness and degeneration. Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, IV.7, 634; Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended", 255–256.

⁴⁶⁹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 704–706.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, VI.1, 842.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid, VI.1, 846.

⁴⁷² See Besonne, "The Eye of the Censor"; Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 84. This early example of normalization and "work ethic in the making" bears a resemblance to the Foucauldian notion of disciplinary power, the micro level of biopower, which acts as a means of normalizing individuals while rendering them docile and productive laborers. This move is also connected to the macro level of biopolitics, since it can be seen as an attempt to regulate the entire workforce at once. As Foucault himself states, these innovations form a crucial step toward the birth of capitalism. Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 185.

⁴⁷³ Parsons, "The Roman Censors in the Renaissance Political Imagination," 586.

between the private and public. Bodin argues explicitly against the essential separation between economic and political governing and places several issues pertaining to life into the very epicenter of political governing. Thirdly, the censors practice control over the quality of citizens – Bodin is not only interested in increasing the size of the population, but also wishes to optimize its composition by preventing its degeneration and corruption. Censorship is used as a population-political tool that helps eliminate corruptive and parasitic vermin from the political body through the logic of a purge. These ideas are centered around the analogy of keeping the body of the commonwealth healthy and, therefore, come remarkably close to Foucault’s formulations of state racism.

Again, these drastic measures are by no means the only way that Bodin would employ in order to normalize the population toward the desired form. Rather than operating in the framework of laws, the censors maneuver through norms in order to instill discipline (and auto-discipline) in their targets. As mentioned above, Foucault believed that the general shift away from laws toward norms indicated a crucial difference between sovereign power and biopower.⁴⁷⁴ I would like to argue that these findings seem to offer strong support for our central claim, according to which Bodin’s political thought contains a distinct biopolitical dimension before the dawn of modernity and the alleged biopolitical era as Foucault understood them.

The question that remains to be answered is whether or not Bodin was inventing something radically new compared to his ancient predecessors when it came to censors and censorship, as well as their biopolitical significance. The answer to this question is most likely closer to a no than a yes. As we have observed time and time again, most of the biopolitical elements witnessed in the Angevin’s political thought can also be found in previous Roman sources. Bodin himself would be the first to argue that his predecessors had already mastered enumerating the people while controlling the intricate details of their lives in a manner that allowed their state to flourish. However, while the Roman censors had an undeniable normalizing effect on the population, I have not come across a correspondingly distinct element of state racism before Bodin introduced his biopolitical analogy of purgation. Even though it may be argued that Bodin merely adopted this ancient toolset from the Romans (and the Greeks as he himself believed), he still managed to make these ideas distinctly his own by adding yet another unprecedented biopolitical layer.

⁴⁷⁴ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 178–179.

6 THE POLITICAL NATURE OF CLIMATES AND TEMPERAMENTS⁴⁷⁵

Before climate change became the issue of unprecedented political importance that it is today, the term climate used to occupy the epicenter of a very different political discussion. Instead of studying the consequences that political decisions and human actions have on the earth's climate system, the likes of Jean Bodin were focused on the effects that specific climates, and the environment in a more general sense, were believed to have on people and politics. Like many of those who came before him, Bodin supposed that people had bodies that consisted of physical matter and that both their composition and the way that they behaved were influenced greatly by the specific environment that they occupied. Therefore, it stands to reason that climate "is, and always has been, political."⁴⁷⁶

The notion of climate is understood here in a somewhat wide sense. "Climate theory" is often used to signify everything from celestial bodies to the climates of large latitudinal zones (northern, southern, and temperate regions), small microclimates within them (swamps, mountains, valleys), as well as the impact that these factors were believed to have on the health, humoral makeup, and overall conduct of human bodies. Climate theory, which should perhaps be called the theory of environmental influence, was not studied solely by those interested in natural philosophy and science – it was also an explicitly political question. We can see this clearly in the case of Bodin, who goes as far as to state that "governments of commonwealths must be diversified according to the

⁴⁷⁵ This is a draft chapter. The final version is forthcoming in *Debating Biopolitics: New Perspectives on the Government of Life* edited by Sara Raimondi and Marco Piasentier, published in 2022 by Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd. The material cannot be used for any other purpose without further permission of the publisher, and is for private use only. Samuel Lindholm, "Governing According to Nature: Jean Bodin on Climates, Humors, and Temperaments," in *Debating Biopolitics: New Perspectives on the Government of Life*, eds. Sara Raimondi and Marco Piasentier (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, forthcoming).

⁴⁷⁶ Mike Hulme, preface to *Governing the Environment in the Early Modern World: Theory and Practice*, eds. Sara Miglietti and John Morgan (London: Routledge, 2017), xii.

diversities of their situations"⁴⁷⁷ and argues that all rulers ought to comprehend the importance of their environment or face the possibility of devastation.

Bodin discusses climate in several instances, but his most notable efforts take place in his main work, the *République*. The theory of environmental influence seems to have been of great personal importance for Bodin, who appears to have discussed it with the Virgin Queen Elizabeth I during his journey to England with the entourage of his patron, the French king's brother Duke Francis, who was looking to marry the foreign monarch, without success.⁴⁷⁸ While climate theory occupies a noteworthy position in Bodin's political thought, we ought to ask why one should pay attention to this archaic discipline today. Modern science offers little support for the ancient and medieval conceptions of climate.⁴⁷⁹ Furthermore, the related ideas concerning astrology and humorism (the ancient medical system based on four basic humors or bodily fluids) have become equally obsolete.

The answer is that studying these themes may prove to be of great use in establishing a biopolitical reading of Bodin's magnum opus – after all, we are dealing with the political nature of the human body. Furthermore, climate theory and its explicit connection to politics are among the issues that Bodin is most remembered for. As McRae puts it, Bodin's "concept of sovereignty, his theory of climate, and his advocacy of religious toleration have today become commonplace in practically all the histories of political thought."⁴⁸⁰ Moreover, the Angevin's climate theory has been described as "almost as widely known as his concept of sovereignty."⁴⁸¹ Although his take on the theory is built largely upon ancient and medieval ideas, his contributions remain a noteworthy chapter in the history of early modern political philosophy. Understanding this is crucial to completing the picture on Bodin's political thought as a whole. Climate theory, again a somewhat misleading term used to signify the sum of all environmental influence, cannot thus be brushed off simply as a peculiar quirk of the past.

Bodin was by no means the first to propose a theory of climates or humors. His description of how these factors were supposed to affect people's actions was not particularly original, either. In fact, he was not even the first to imply their political significance. However, his take on the subject still differs from most ancient, medieval, and early modern theories. Compared to his predecessors, Bodin was much less concerned about the specifics of how climates and humors were believed to affect the health and actions of single individuals.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁷ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, V.1, 146 [666].

⁴⁷⁸ Kuntz, introduction to *Colloquium of the Seven*, xxiii, n. 29.

⁴⁷⁹ However, Richard Spavin claims that Bodin's contribution to climate theory occupies the area between the scientific and rhetorical; this means that his take was never meant to be read as an entirely scientific model in the first place; instead, it was designed partly as a powerful metaphor used for political purposes. Spavin, "Jean Bodin and the Idea of Anachorism," in *Governing the Environment in the Early Modern World: Theory and Practice*, eds. Sara Miglietti and John Morgan (London: Routledge, 2017), 39, 47.

⁴⁸⁰ Kenneth McRae, preface to *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, by Jean Bodin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), A vii.

⁴⁸¹ Kenneth McRae, "Bodin's Contributions," in *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, by Jean Bodin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), A 3–A 13.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, A 22–A 23.

Furthermore, he did not concentrate his efforts on the already thoroughly debated questions concerning the compatibility of free will and environmental influence.⁴⁸³ He had other things in mind.

Indeed, Bodin placed most of his focus on the specific social and political elements of the climate question.⁴⁸⁴ In other words, he applied the pre-existing theory in a manner that made it absolutely inseparable from the questions of political governing.⁴⁸⁵ Going as far as to claim that all previous political writers had neglected the topic, often with disastrous consequences,⁴⁸⁶ he made plans to end such detrimental ignorance and never shied away from calling out those who had not devoted enough time and effort to studying the all-important matter. For example, he references Machiavelli by name as someone who had absolutely no idea about the different peoples and had never read a good book in his life.⁴⁸⁷

We begin this chapter with a brief look at the known origins of theories concerning humors, temperaments, and climates. We approach these issues by introducing some of the most famous theorists in the respective fields, many of whom Bodin himself cites as authorities on the matter. This allows us to establish a basic understanding of the ancient and medieval discussions to which the Angevin and other early modern thinkers would later contribute. Secondly, we look at Bodin's climate theory and the forms of environmental influence that he believed in. We focus predominantly on the political aspects of his argument, which includes, but is not limited to, the proper governing of particular peoples and deciding on the suitable form of the state according to their natural inclinations. Finally, we consider the possibility of establishing a biopolitical reading of this peculiar, yet essential, branch of the Angevin's political thought. We discuss his takes on sex and bodily and mental health, and the methods he would employ to alter some of the natural dispositions.

6.1 The Historical Context

In order to comprehend Bodin's contributions to climate theory as well as possible, we ought to first examine some of the fundamental ideas and historical discussions revolving around this topic. The three key concepts are humors, temperaments, and climates, all of which date back at least to the medical and geographical theories of the antiquity. According to these ideas, which are inseparably intertwined in Bodin's thought, the specific climates and dominant bodily humors have numerous effects on human beings' health and behavior.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 663; See also Marian J. Tooley, "Bodin and the Mediaeval Theory of Climate," *Speculum* 28, no. 1 (January 1953): 64.

⁴⁸⁷ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 686.

6.1.1 Humors, Elements, and Temperaments

The theory of four bodily fluids or humors (Greek *khymos*, meaning literally “juice”) and the pivotal role they were believed to play in bodily health was incorporated systematically into written medical theory in *Nature of Man* (*Peri physeōs anthrōpou*),⁴⁸⁸ which is often credited to the famed physician Hippocrates of Cos (c. 460–c. 370 BCE). There is no certainty about the true authorship when it comes to the majority of his texts, but this single most important Hippocratic work to discuss humors is believed to have been written by Polybus (fl. c. 400 BCE), who was Hippocrates’s student and son-in-law.⁴⁸⁹

Regardless of who wrote it, the Hippocratic model considers the human body to consist of four basic fluids: blood (*haima*), phlegm (*phlegma*), yellow bile (*xantē kholē*), and black bile (*melaina kholē*).⁴⁹⁰ A healthy body is comprised of a balanced mixture of these four humors, whereas their disproportion and separation within the body are believed to cause pain. Each of the humors produces specific corporeal effects and they each have a unique association with one of the four seasons.⁴⁹¹ Phlegm is cold and wet; therefore, it seems only logical that it is connected to winter. Blood is tied to spring as both the season and the fluid are moist and warm. Summer, the hottest and driest of the seasons, is linked with yellow bile. Finally, black bile, which is cold and dry, increases during fall.

The connections between the humors and the associated times of the year are enforced further by the fact that certain medical issues seem to always intensify during the corresponding season; there is, for example, obviously more mucus (phlegm) in the throat and the nose during winter than there usually is during any other season.⁴⁹² The age of the person also seems to affect the prevalence of specific humors, but the author of the *Nature of Man* does not yet develop this idea to its fullest form.⁴⁹³ If we are to believe another Hippocratic work, *Regimen in Health*, the composition of humors can also be altered to some extent with a regimen befitting the current season.⁴⁹⁴ This means that people can improve their health by modifying their own humoral balance.

⁴⁸⁸ Hippocrates, *Nature of Man*, in *Hippocrates*, trans. W. H. S. Jones, vol. IV (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 1–42. The Hippocratic corpus also includes a somewhat misleadingly titled work *Humours* [*Peri khymōn*]. In actuality, only *Nature of Man* explores the topic in depth. See Hippocrates, *Humours*, in *Hippocrates*, trans. W. H. S. Jones, vol. IV (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 61–96; W. H. S. Jones, introduction to *Hippocrates*, by Hippocrates, vol. IV (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), xxxii.

⁴⁸⁹ Aristotle seems to suggest that Polybus was the author. Aristotle, *The History of Animals*, in *The Works of Aristotle*, trans. D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson, vol. IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), 3.513a.

⁴⁹⁰ Hippocrates, *Nature of Man*, IV.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, VII.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, IV; see Jacques Jouanna, “The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise *The Nature of Man*: The Theory of Four Humors,” in *Greek Medicine from Hippocrates to Galen: Selected Papers*, ed. Philip van der Eijk, trans. Neil Allies (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 335.

⁴⁹⁴ Hippocrates, *Regimen in Health*, in *Hippocrates*, trans. W. H. S. Jones, vol. IV (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), I; see Jouanna, “The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise *The Nature of Man*,” 335.

Plato and Aristotle make no tangible reference to the Hippocratic theory of four bodily fluids per se.⁴⁹⁵ In fact, while humors, in general, did merit some discussion, the theory concerning the four specific ones mentioned above was not picked up before Galen (129–c. 200/216 CE) discussed it and other Hippocratic theories.⁴⁹⁶ However, the second-century physician did not adopt the humoral theory as such but, instead, fused it together with the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles’s (c. 494–434 BCE)⁴⁹⁷ ideas concerning the four “elements”: earth, air, fire, and water. This connection may seem obvious, but it did not exist within the Hippocratic model.⁴⁹⁸ Although the two formulations had not been connected explicitly in any known sources before Galen,⁴⁹⁹ they do share several noticeable similarities. For example, while the system of four bodily fluids is absent in Plato’s works, he believed that the four elements were behind comparable health effects;⁵⁰⁰ meanwhile, Aristotle supposed famously that all the matter in the world consists of the four elements.⁵⁰¹

One of Galen’s most interesting contributions to humoral theory has to do with him matching the dominant bodily fluids tentatively with certain human characteristics. This signals the birth of an early theory of temperaments.⁵⁰² According to the fully developed model, a person dominated by black bile (*melaina kholē*) is considered melancholic, someone with an overabundance of phlegm is phlegmatic, a person dominated by blood (Latin: *sanguis*) is sanguine, while someone with large quantities of yellow bile (*xantē kholē*) is choleric. Other contributors to medicine in late antiquity would complete the connection between elements and humors as well as that of humors and temperaments.⁵⁰³

Humorism would stay relevant during the European Middle Ages and beyond.⁵⁰⁴ As we can clearly see with the case of Bodin and his contemporaries, similar ideas remained more or less viable during early modernity. However, they were also beginning to attract criticism. The Galenic theories faced their first true challenge in 1543 from Bodin’s contemporary Andreas Vesalius’ *De Humani*

⁴⁹⁵ Jouanna, “The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise *The Nature of Man*,” 327–338.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Empedocles, *Fragments of Empedocles*, in *Early Greek Philosophy*, trans. John Burnet (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1920), 15–20.

⁴⁹⁸ The Galenic connection between elements and humors remains incomplete since one of the humors, blood, does not yet correspond to a single element. Jouanna, “The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise *The Nature of Man*,” 327–341.

⁴⁹⁹ Galen, *On Hippocrates’ On the Nature of Man*, in *Medicina Antiqua*, UCL, trans. W. J. Lewis, March 27, 2020,

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucgajpd/medicina%20antiqua/tr_GNatHom.html, 51–53.

⁵⁰⁰ Plato, *Timaeus*, in *Plato*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, vol. 9 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 86a.

⁵⁰¹ Aristotle, *Meteorology*, in *Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. E.W. Webster, vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1984), 4.339a.

⁵⁰² Galen, *On Hippocrates’ On the Nature of Man*, 95–97.

⁵⁰³ Jouanna, “The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise *The Nature of Man*,” 327–341.

⁵⁰⁴ Avicenna devoted an influential chapter to the study of humors in his medical encyclopedia. Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna*, trans. Oskar Cameron Gruner (New York: AMS Press, 1973), I, IV, 67–113.

*Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem (The Fabric of the Human Body)*⁵⁰⁵ and later William Harvey's 1628 work *Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis in Animalibus (An Anatomical Exercise on the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Living Beings)*.⁵⁰⁶

Terms like melancholic and phlegmatic are still widely used today, while the idea of human temperaments persists in modern psychology. Even though this modern notion bears virtually no reference to the obsolete theory of four humors, or the original temperaments associated with them, it still refers to certain behavioral patterns that are based on nature (biology). According to Foucault, psychology, which came into existence after the so-called classical period, ended up reducing "the classical experience of unreason to a strictly moral perception of madness."⁵⁰⁷ Before this development, physical and psychological interventions were inseparable from one another. For example, an attempt to reduce melancholia through labor was not a purely psychological treatment in the modern sense of the word because it had to do with a more holistic view of the human being and associated factors such as "the movement of the spirits in the nerves, the density of the humors."⁵⁰⁸

6.1.2 Climes and Climates

While the four humors and their specific connection to bodily health, human actions, and politics play an important role in Bodin's larger theory regarding environmental influence, there is another, perhaps even more significant element that we need to discuss in order to comprehend his vision. We are dealing with a different (yet connected) ancient idea adopted by the Angevin – climate or, more specifically, the division of the earth into distinct latitudinal zones, also known as climes, which can be split even further into a mosaic of smaller microclimates. One of the most important formulations concerning the effects of climates comes from Aristotle, who argues that the people of distinctive locations (for example, the cold North) display particular characteristics.

The nations inhabiting the cold places and those of Europe are full of spirit but somewhat deficient in intelligence and skill, so that they continue comparatively free, but lacking in political organization and capacity to rule their neighbors. The peoples of Asia on the other hand are intelligent and skillful in temperament, but lack spirit, so that they are in continuous subjection and slavery. But the Greek race participates in both characters, just as it occupies the middle position geographically, for it is both spirited and intelligent; hence it continues to be free and to have very good political institutions, and to be capable of ruling all mankind if it attains constitutional unity. The same diversity also exists among the Greek races compared with one another:

⁵⁰⁵ See Andreas Vesalius, *The Fabric of the Human Body: An Annotated Translation of the 1543 and 1555 Editions of "De Humani Corporis Fabrica"*, eds. Daniel H. Garrison and Malcolm H. Hast (Basel: Karger, 2014).

⁵⁰⁶ See William Harvey, *The Anatomical Exercises: De Motu Cordis and De Circulatione Sanguinis in English Translation*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Mineola, New York: Dover, 2013).

⁵⁰⁷ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 197.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

some have a one-sided nature, others are happily blended in regard to both these capacities.⁵⁰⁹

According to Aristotle, peoples of certain areas are naturally inclined toward servitude while others are considered natural rulers because of their climate. This kind of proto-racism, understood in a very wide sense of the word,⁵¹⁰ would prove to be a convenient instrument for imperialists.⁵¹¹ In another work, *Meteorology*, Aristotle divides the earth into five distinct zones.⁵¹² According to him, both poles of the earth are uninhabitable due to extreme cold while the area surrounding the equator is also uninhabitable, but this time for the opposite reason – extreme heat. Two temperate and habitable zones are, therefore, left to either side of the equatorial zone, each limited by one of the polar regions.

The words “clime” and “climate” are derived from the Greek term *klima* (plural: *klimata*), which is used to signify a slope or an inclination, but also carries a more technical meaning denoting the latitudinal zones of the earth that would often be determined based on the duration of the longest day.⁵¹³ One famous division is presented by the Egyptian geographer and astronomer Claudius Ptolemy (ca. 100–ca. 170 CE) who provides a system of seven climes.⁵¹⁴ Centuries later, Bodin, too, would divide the earth into distinct zones, which were, furthermore, connected to corresponding humors and specific effects witnessed in the health, behavior, and politics of their inhabitants.

Bodin is not the first to establish a link between bodily fluids and climates. Such an idea appears, for example, in the part of *De Regimine Principum* that is credited to Thomas. Here we witness a claim that bodily health is the product of a temperate admixture of the humors and that living in a moderate climate between the two extremes is the best way of preserving this desirable balance.⁵¹⁵ Even more noteworthy is the fact that his argument includes an explicit political aspect: politics and armies tend to be more successful if they reside in a temperate region, therefore cities ought to be established accordingly.⁵¹⁶

The question concerning environmental factors, understood now in a narrower sense, meaning the conditions of a specific place within the larger zones, is often just as important as the massive climes. While Bodin places much emphasis on the typical characteristics that the peoples of each habitable zone display, he does not fail to note the significance of the microclimates within the larger climes.⁵¹⁷ People from distinct locations such as mountains or valleys act

⁵⁰⁹ Aristotle, *Politics* 7.1327b.

⁵¹⁰ Racism in the narrow sense is tied to hereditary issues, but the term can also be used in a wider meaning to denote other powerful inclinations. Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 104–105.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 503.

⁵¹² Aristotle, *Meteorology* 2.362a.

⁵¹³ Dmitry Shcheglov, “Hipparchus’ Table of Klimata and Ptolemy’s Geography,” *Orbis terrarium* 9 (2007): 159–192.

⁵¹⁴ Ptolemy, *Ptolemy’s Almagest*, ed. and trans. G. J. Toomer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 2.6.

⁵¹⁵ Ptolemy of Lucca, with portions attributed to Thomas Aquinas, *On the Government of Rulers*, 2.1, 104–106.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁷ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 663.

differently even if they both inhabit the same zone, which is characterized mostly by one of the four humors. The author of the Hippocratic work *Airs, Waters, Places* has been credited as the first to devise an argument for the health-related influence of environmental factors (more specifically airs, waters, and places, as the name of the book would suggest).⁵¹⁸ As we have gathered in chapter four, both Plato and Aristotle were aware of the environment's health-related significance.⁵¹⁹

On a similar note, the Romans were conscious of the unhealthy properties of marshes,⁵²⁰ which Bodin, too, mentions as one of the notable microclimates within the larger climes.⁵²¹ Many years later, Foucault connects the emergence of biopolitics to people's "environment, the milieu in which they live."⁵²² This includes "the direct effects of the geographical, climatic, or hydrographic environment: the problem, for instance, of swamps, and of epidemics linked to the existence of swamps throughout the first half of the nineteenth century."⁵²³ There is no reason to assume that the ancient discussions concerning the negative effects of swamps were somehow less biopolitical.

6.2 Bodin on Natural Inclinations

[Bodin's] doctrines were a deduction from still current medieval physiological theories about the close inter-relation of mind and body. Temperature and humidity determine physique, and physique determines mental and moral aptitudes. This being so it is obvious that the forms of law and government must also be shaped by these unalterable conditions.⁵²⁴

Bodin represents a continuation of ancient and medieval ideas that were still very topical during early modernity when he applied the theory to specific governmental purposes. He approached the subject from several angles, but since this chapter delves into the theory's specifically political and governmental aspects, we ought to focus on the first chapter of the fifth book of the *République*, "*Du reiglement qu'il faut tenir pour accommoder la forme de République à la diversité des hommes: & le moyen de cognoistre le natuel des peuples*,"⁵²⁵ translated into English

⁵¹⁸ Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, in *Hippocrates*, trans. W. H. S. Jones, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), VI-IX; Genevieve Miller, "'Airs, Waters, and Places' in History," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 17:1 (January 1962): 130.

⁵¹⁹ See Aristotle, *Politics* 7.1330a; Plato, *Laws* 5.747d-e.

⁵²⁰ Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, IV.

⁵²¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 663.

⁵²² Foucault, "*Society Must Be Defended*", 245.

⁵²³ Ibid; Raphaël Morera has argued that the climate theories of Bodin and his contemporaries were linked directly to state efforts toward altering the land for the use of the people. These projects had to do especially with the draining of harmful marshes in a population-political manner that made room for a larger and healthier populace. Raphaël Morera, "Marshes as Microclimates: Governing with the Environmental in the Early Modern France," in *Governing the Environment in the Early Modern World: Theory and Practice*, eds. Sara Miglietti and John Morgan (London: Routledge, 2017), 62, 71.

⁵²⁴ Tooley, introduction to *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, xxxii.

⁵²⁵ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 663-701.

as “The Order to be observed in adapting the Form of the Commonwealth to Divers Conditions of Men, and the means of determining their Dispositions.”⁵²⁶ Anyone familiar with the *République* will not be surprised that Bodin discusses a topic such as this in one of the final two books of his major opus. The concluding parts of the work have proven themselves veritable goldmines for the purposes of studying Bodin’s applied approaches to political questions.

However, it is important to note that the *République* was by no means the only instance in which Bodin discussed the topic of climate. He had already published what has been described as the “first draft”⁵²⁷ of the same chapter in his first important work, the *Methodus*,⁵²⁸ and continued to discuss related issues in his later books, such as the *Theatrum*, in which he focuses on the theory of the celestial bodies and how they were believed to affect physical matter.⁵²⁹ Astrological theories like this were widely accepted during the late Middle Ages, and while they had started to attract criticism in early modernity, the Angevin chose to stand by them.⁵³⁰ As we are about to witness, they are also very much present in his main work.

It is important to note that Bodin’s ideas regarding environmental influence did not stay consistent throughout his career. It can be argued that he “retains the gist”⁵³¹ of what he said in the *Methodus* “while also further developing his theory of climates in the direction of practical governmental application”⁵³² in the context of his main work. However, his later contributions tell a somewhat different story. The mature Angevin would attempt to leave political inquiry in favor of theological and natural approaches.⁵³³ He would also renounce the idea of an Aristotelian mean between two vices that still dominated his more famous works, according to which the upright temperate zone should be seen as superior to its less-than-perfect northern and southern counterparts.⁵³⁴ Tooley⁵³⁵ and Richard Spavin⁵³⁶ provide excellent comparative readings of Bodin’s various takes on the topic. However, because our focus is specifically on the political aspects of climate theory, especially its governmental applications, this chapter emphasizes the Angevin’s main work, the *République*.

⁵²⁶ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, V.1, 149–162.

⁵²⁷ Tooley, “Bodin and the Mediaeval Theory of Climate,” 64. The Latin version of the *République* also includes this same chapter without many major additions. *Ibid.*

⁵²⁸ Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, V, 91–176.

⁵²⁹ See Bodin, *Universae naturae theatrum*, 15–16; Tooley, “Bodin and the Mediaeval Theory of Climate,” 66–68.

⁵³⁰ Tooley, “Bodin and the Mediaeval Theory of Climate,” 66–68.

⁵³¹ Sara Miglietti, “Between Nature and Culture: Integrated Ecology of Renaissance Climate Theories,” in *Early Modern Écologies: Beyond English Ecocentrism*, eds. Pauline Goul and Philip John Usher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 146.

⁵³² *Ibid.*

⁵³³ Spavin, “Jean Bodin and the Idea of Anachorism,” 49–51.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ Tooley, “Bodin and the Mediaeval Theory of Climate.”

⁵³⁶ Spavin, “Jean Bodin and the Idea of Anachorism.” See also Spavin’s dissertation: Richard Spavin: “Les symboles politiques du climat: Bodin, Montesquieu, Rousseau.” PhD diss., Université de Toronto, 2014.

6.2.1 The Diversity of Peoples

So far in discussing the commonwealth we have been concerned with general principles. It remains to discuss the particular characteristics of the different sorts of commonwealth that the diversity of races [*diversité des peuples*] requires. Political institutions must be adapted to environment and human laws to natural laws. Those who have failed to do this, and have tried to make nature obey their laws, have brought disorder, and even ruin, on great states.⁵³⁷

Bodin divides the earth into latitudinal zones in a manner that is highly reminiscent of Aristotle's model witnessed in the *Meteorology*. To be more precise, the Angevin allots all of the commonwealths in the northern hemisphere into three thirty-degree climes.⁵³⁸ The first thirty degrees north of the equator make up the hot south, the next thirty degrees encompass the temperate zone in the middle, whereas the final thirty degrees belong to the frigid north.⁵³⁹ After establishing these main categories, Bodin then moves on to divide each of them into two, thus ending up with six separate fifteen-degree zones within the hemisphere. However, he does not seem to find either the entire southern half of the globe or the most torrid and frigid fifteen degrees of the northern hemisphere that interesting. For example, he goes on to describe the northernmost zone as a place habited only by a few beastlike cave-dwellers. According to Bodin, there are thus only four climes that are of any actual consequence.

There are several differences between the peoples that occupy the distinct zones. Bodin devotes most of his efforts to describing the typical characteristics of the people living in the habitable north and south. Let us discuss the northerners first. Bodin believes that these people are strong and large and that their immense appetite matches their sizable frames.⁵⁴⁰ Due to the cold environment that they inhabit, their bodies conserve a lot of heat, and their insides are thus hot and humid.⁵⁴¹ The northerners are known for having an abundance of physical force, and they can amass great armies, which, however, do not tend to fare well when they march too deep into the south.⁵⁴²

The most significant drawback to the great power wielded by the northerners seems to be that they are described as cruel and not fully commanded by reason.⁵⁴³ The stereotypical northerner is thus a brutish character blessed with a large and strong frame but also someone who lacks the optimal mental capacities. Climates also affect the way that people look. This is why those living in the cold regions have a distinct appearance: their eyes are green, and their hair is either blonde or ginger, depending on the exact latitude.⁵⁴⁴ Their skin is fair and hairy; they sweat easily and lack the ability to stand heat.⁵⁴⁵

⁵³⁷ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, V.1, 145 [663].

⁵³⁸ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 667.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, V.1, 668–673.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, V.1, 699.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, V.1, 579–681.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, V.1, 668.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, V.1, 699.

In comparison, Bodin thinks that southerners are the complete opposite of their northern counterparts regarding most of the aforementioned characteristics. They are typically smaller and weaker; they are also cold and dry inside, resulting from their hot habitat.⁵⁴⁶ They need less nutrition, but since this is due to their natural inclination and not because of virtue, they should not be praised for it.⁵⁴⁷ Furthermore, their appetite seems to grow whenever they travel toward the north.⁵⁴⁸ Like northerners, the people of the south are cruel, however, the two display opposed forms of viciousness. As mentioned, northerners are brutish, whereas the cunning southerners allow their melancholic passions to push them toward plotting cruel revenge against their enemies.⁵⁴⁹ Like northerners, the people of the south have a distinct appearance; their eyes and skin are dark (black is the color of melancholy, the humor that dominates them).⁵⁵⁰ Their hair is also black and coiled from the dryness.⁵⁵¹ Finally, they have less hair, and they do not sweat as easily as northerners do.⁵⁵²

Bodin speaks much less about the people occupying the middle region than he does about those living in the habitable north and the south. The temperate people are defined mainly as an optimal amalgamation of the two less-than-perfect extremes. The intermediating area does, nevertheless, have its own unique characteristics as well. Bodin describes these people as just – they are not affected by either the brutish or the cunning form of cruelty.⁵⁵³ If northerners are natural soldiers⁵⁵⁴ or laborers⁵⁵⁵ and southerners are philosophers or scientists, the people of the middle region are inclined toward law and governing.⁵⁵⁶ This prowess is unique to them, and it does not seem to come with large drawbacks; instead, the temperate people get to enjoy the desirable qualities that make the other regions great (contemplation and military might), although with some moderation.⁵⁵⁷

Bodin connects the climates to a plethora of other issues as well. Some of these associations bear a striking resemblance to the ancient humoral theories and their previously mentioned connections with issues such as bodily fluids, the four seasons, and different kinds of sickness. Bodin's suggestions include, for example, a comparison between the different climates and the ages of man.⁵⁵⁸ He

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, V.1, 668–673.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, V.1, 678.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, V.1, 673–674, 699.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, V.1, 679–681.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, V.1, 699.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, V.1, 690.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, V.1, 668–673.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, V.1, 686. Bodin does not go into detail, but he does state that the southern, northern, and mixed temperaments coincide with youth, adult life, and old age, perhaps suggesting that the strong but thoughtless, northerners are like the youth while the peaceful, contemplative, yet also weak, southerners are like the elderly. One thing seems to be clear; the people of the temperate zone are like the middle-aged who get to enjoy some good qualities from both extremes without suffering from any of their respective drawbacks.

also argues that the planets have their own relation to specific climes.⁵⁵⁹ The south is connected to Saturn and Venus, which imply the wisdom and venerable inclinations of the southerners, the latter of which is discussed in greater depth later in this chapter. The middle zone is linked to Jupiter and Mercury, which signify the temperate people's competence in political government. Meanwhile, the north shares a bond with Mars and the Moon, which symbolize war and hunting.

The most notable association that Bodin devises has to do with the four humors. While each bodily fluid and some of its corresponding effects can be found in all climates, each seems to play a dominant role in specific parts of the world. Although the manifestation of specific humors does not seem to fit perfectly with the exact fifteen-degree allocations mentioned earlier, the climes can still be used as beneficial guidelines. Hot and moist northerners, such as the Scandinavians, are phlegmatic, which renders them heavy and unsubtle.⁵⁶⁰ The temperate zone, which is divided into two halves, is also home to two distinct humors. The northernmost people of the temperate zone are sanguine. This temperament is found, for example, in the Germans, who are joyous and strong.⁵⁶¹ The choleric, the second temperate people, can be found dominant in France where the people are active and prompt.⁵⁶² The final temperament consists of melancholic people like the Spaniards of the south, who are restful, contemplative, and oftentimes sad.⁵⁶³

Of course, Bodin does not suggest that simple latitudinal lines on a chart are enough to categorize the people of enormous areas into four distinct, unambiguous, and homogenous groups. Instead, there is an abundance of other elements that affect the natural inclinations of human beings. For example, there is a world of difference between the two compass points that we have not yet mentioned. The east is considered to be more like the south, while the west is more related to the north.⁵⁶⁴ Furthermore, the general qualities of the zones do not strictly apply to all of the people in a single climate, country, or even a city.⁵⁶⁵ People within the same zone may display different temperaments depending on their specific habitats,⁵⁶⁶ which may be described as microclimates. Mountainous people, for example, are somewhat reminiscent of northerners, even if they live deep in the south.⁵⁶⁷ People of barren areas are industrious and populous, people of fertile places tend to be cowardly, whereas heavily trafficked places such as coastal towns and islands are filled with merchants and dishonest people who display a diversity of humors.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid, V.1, 691.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid, V.1, 679.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid, V.1, 678.

⁵⁶² Ibid, V.1, 677–678.

⁵⁶³ Ibid, V.1, 699.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid, V.1, 690–691.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid, V.1, 663.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid, V.1, 694–697.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. Even though the specifics of these kind of taxonomies of humors, temperaments, and climates fluctuated, the general logic remained similar, as we see with Foucault's analysis: "In the classical period, the melancholy of the English was easily explained by the influence

6.2.2 Sex, Health, and Madness

It is imperative to note that most of the inclinations caused by the climates are primarily corporeal; they have to do with the human body and the way that it is conducted.⁵⁶⁹ Erotic behavior is one of the most noticeable bodily functions augmented by the environment. Bodin considers southerners to be the lustiest among all people.⁵⁷⁰ He even argues that the ratio between men and women is different depending on the latitude. Some southern men have multiple wives, which is exemplified by the lavish harems of their rulers;⁵⁷¹ meanwhile, there seem to be fewer women in the north than there are men, some of whom are left without a wife.⁵⁷² Northerners are known for their sexual inactivity and even occasional celibacy, due not to chastity but their natural inclinations.⁵⁷³ It comes as no surprise that the temperate people land in the golden mean of this spectrum.⁵⁷⁴ They are moderate in their carnal desires and usually opt for a single wife.

How does the north retain its characteristic strength if the people there are indeed so impotent? Bodin answers this question in the Latin version of the *République*, where he argues that frequent and promiscuous sex acts tend to lead to a decreased number of children and a greater degree of heterogeneity in the offspring.⁵⁷⁵ Bodin alludes to Lycurgus, the semi-mythical lawgiver of Sparta, who, according to Plutarch's biography, wanted to limit the frequency of sexual intercourse by forbidding men to spend the nights with their wives. This was not only done in order to enforce self-constraint among the austere Spartans, but it also allowed their "bodies to be full of creative energy"⁵⁷⁶ when they finally did get the opportunity to reunite with their partners. This explains why northerners have plenty of children even though they perform intercourse much less often than their southern counterparts. Bodin also makes the curious argument that this is why all northern children look alike.⁵⁷⁷

As we have established, the Hippocratic humoral theory was tied to the field of medicine. Bodin follows this and other ancient theories by stating that the climates and the humors have specific effects on bodily health. For example, the melancholic temperament of southerners seems to act as the key to their extended lifespan.⁵⁷⁸ However, the south should not be thought of as a symbol of great health, since the deadliest diseases seem to always come from the south or the

of a maritime climate, cold, humidity, the instability of the weather; all those fine droplets of water that penetrated the channels and fibers of the human body and made it lose its firmness, predisposed it to madness." Foucault, *Madness & Civilization*, 13.

⁵⁶⁹ McRae, "Bodin's Contributions," A 23.

⁵⁷⁰ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 683.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, V.1, 691.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, V.1, 683.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁵ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, V.1, 507.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; Plutarch, *The Life of Lycurgus*, in *Parallel Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 15.1-3, 16.6.

⁵⁷⁷ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, V.1, 507.

⁵⁷⁸ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 685.

east, which is again associated more with the south than with the north.⁵⁷⁹ Bodin also links different forms of mental illness with the different humors.⁵⁸⁰ He states that melancholic people are more predisposed to becoming frenzied or mad with fury (*furieux*) than others.⁵⁸¹ In fact, southern commonwealths need to have an increased number of hospitals just in order to treat all the people affected by this condition. Meanwhile, the joyous sanguine people display a completely different kind of madness (*folie*), which makes them dance, laugh, and jump around wildly.⁵⁸² As we discussed previously, northerners are considered slow and phlegmatic, whereas the choleric French people seem to dodge yet another bullet.

It is plain to see that the question of climate is intertwined with that of the human body. Furthermore, Bodin's program connects these corporeal effects to several biopolitically charged themes, including sexual behavior, madness, and health. These are, of course, issues that Foucault and the other theorists of biopolitics would go on to study in their historical analyses. It is absolutely imperative to note that the Angevin's theory is not simply descriptive, but, as we shall soon find out in greater detail, he is also interested in ways of altering the resulting inclinations. Next, we focus more deeply on the explicitly political side of climate theory.

6.2.3 The Political Significance of the Environment

A wise ruler [*le sage gouverneur*] of any people must ... have a thorough understanding of their disposition [*l'humeur*] and natural inclinations before he attempts any change in the constitution or the laws. One of the greatest, if not the principal, foundation of the commonwealth is the suitability of its government to the nature of the people, and of its laws and ordinances to the requirements of time, place, and persons.⁵⁸³

Bodin argues that the one in charge of governing the people ought to act like a good architect who considers the materials available in the proximity.⁵⁸⁴ Natural inclinations do not predetermine people's lives entirely, but they are, nevertheless, of great consequence in establishing a commonwealth and determining its laws – the optimal way of governing has to do with the temperaments at play. Different sets of tools are needed to control the distinct peoples: southerners listen to religion, northerners adhere to force, and temperate people understand justice.⁵⁸⁵ Some of the archetypes seem to be predisposed to certain political problems; for example, the melancholic humor dominant in the south is very hard to purge and has to be managed differently compared to the other humors; southerners are often dedicated to contemplation and far from skillful when it comes to governing.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid, V.1, 692.

⁵⁸⁰ See Tooley, "Bodin and the Mediaeval Theory of Climate," 73–76.

⁵⁸¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 681.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, V.1, 145 [666].

⁵⁸⁴ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 666.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, V.1, 686.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid, V.1, 680–682, 686.

As we have discussed, the general connection between climates and the way that political life ought to be established is not unprecedented in the field of political philosophy.⁵⁸⁷ Bodin's innovation lies elsewhere: he seems to be the first to argue that the particular nature of a given climate does not only influence how governance or law should be organized, but that it also indicates the optimal form of a commonwealth for each particular situation.⁵⁸⁸ Bodin is famous for considering monarchy as the best out of the three possible constitutions, but he also believes that other forms of state may suit some commonwealths better because of their particular climate.⁵⁸⁹ Attempting to rule over people in a manner that stands against their natural inclinations can lead to disadvantageous outcomes. People of northern and mountainous regions, for example, favor popular governments or elected monarchs, and although they do respect force, they do not endure tyranny.⁵⁹⁰

It is important to note that the inclinations can be altered with the right interventions. Bodin argues that

the discipline of laws can modify the natural disposition of men [French: *la discipline peut changer le droit naturel des hommes*; Latin: *disciplina valeat ad immutanda hominum ingenia*], for we reject the doctrine of Polybius and Galen that their natural environment has an absolute and necessary effect in forming men's morals [French: *mœurs*; Latin: *mores*].⁵⁹¹

This shows, among other aspects, that climate theory does not attempt to separate nature from culture; instead, climate has to do with the area shared by these two spheres.⁵⁹² Nature affects culture and politics through climate, but these effects remain at least somewhat mutable by human interventions. However, changing dispositions is no easy task; it can take up to hundreds of years.⁵⁹³ Education is to be considered key.⁵⁹⁴ It is also noteworthy that while laws and customs can indeed change the way that people act, neglecting to enforce good practices allows people to return to their original state.⁵⁹⁵

What does Bodin have to say when it comes to the specifics of controlling the distinct dispositions? In the Latin version of the *République*, he argues that southerners ought to participate in bodily exercises because of their particular

⁵⁸⁷ Tooley mentions John of Paris and Dante Alighieri as thinkers who had suggested that governing ought to be based according to the different natures of people. Tooley, "Bodin and the Medieval Theory of Climate," 79–80; See Dante Alighieri, *The De Monarchia of Dante Alighieri*, trans. Aurelia Henry (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), I, xiv; John of Paris, *On Royal and Papal Power*, trans. J. A. Watt (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971), III.

⁵⁸⁸ Tooley, "Bodin and the Mediaeval Theory of Climate," 80–81.

⁵⁸⁹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 694.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, V.1, 150–151 [666]; Latin: Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, V.1, 494. The Hippocratic tradition does include an idea of adjusting one's humors through a befitting regimen despite what Bodin claims here. See Hippocrates, *Regimen in Health*, I.

⁵⁹² Miglietti, "Between Nature and Culture," 149.

⁵⁹³ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 698.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, V.1, 678.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, V.1, 698.

nature.⁵⁹⁶ This is apparently also the reason why Plato and Lycurgus pay so much attention to this topic.⁵⁹⁷ If southerners ought to exercise their bodies, northerners should take up books.⁵⁹⁸ Bodin cites *Politics* VIII, where Aristotle argues that while training the body is indeed necessary, neglecting to exercise the mind makes boys vulgar and animal-like.⁵⁹⁹ The Angevin also refers to Plato's *Timaeus* V on a related note and argues that the practice of gymnastics and music is necessary for every city because of their respective effects on the body and the mind.⁶⁰⁰ According to Plato, these two arts create a balance: neglecting music makes people barbarous, while overlooking gymnastics renders them weak.⁶⁰¹

6.3 The Biopolitics of Climate Theory

The theory of environmental influence is but one of the many instances where Bodin adopts an ancient idea and makes it fit his time and place – early modern France. In this particular case, the Angevin develops the ancient and medieval climate theories by politicizing them further in a manner that is highly reminiscent of his take on censors and censorship, discussed in the previous chapter. This is not to argue that there was never a political element in climate theory before Bodin – as we have witnessed, the opposite is true. Instead, the prevailing literature and our own close reading seem to suggest that the Angevin's originality lies with the fact that his interpretation had more political layers than those of his predecessors. It can even be argued that his theory was primarily political, unlike many of those that came before it.

Bodin's patent belief in the environment's powerful yet malleable influence on human lives and especially his emphasis on political and governmental interventions to alter the resulting inclinations label his approach to climate an example of distinct biopolitical elements before the biopolitical era of modernity as defined by Foucault. It is clear that Bodin's ideas of governing people according to their natural inclinations (including their literal bodily fluids) have to do with the juxtaposition between political power and the physical human body – not only does the political system need to be adapted in order to suit the people of a specific region, but some of these bodily predispositions can also be altered through the correct political interventions.

Bodin has his eyes on the corporeal human body: he takes time to discuss several biopolitically significant themes such as sex, reproduction, education,

⁵⁹⁶ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, V.1, 502.

⁵⁹⁷ The importance of physical exercise permeates *The Life of Lycurgus*. One of the benefits that arise from training the body is the fact that it builds obedience, but there are also several other reasons that are related to both health and population politics. For example, young women are supposed to perform physical exercises since it helps them endure childbirth and makes their offspring more vigorous. Plutarch, *The Life of Lycurgus*, 14.1–3, 16.6.

⁵⁹⁸ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, V.1, 502.

⁵⁹⁹ Aristotle, *Politics* 8.1338b.

⁶⁰⁰ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, V.1, 519.

⁶⁰¹ Plato, *Timaeus* 88b–d.

governing, discipline, bodily health, insanity, and the necessity of physical exercise, all of which are connected directly to the different climes and microclimates as well as the humors and temperaments displayed by their inhabitants. These examples help highlight the unmistakable biopolitical element that occupies the very center of the Angevin's climate theory. Although his ideas are clearly obsolete, they play a far too pivotal role within his whole political thought in order to be disregarded completely as the superstitious beliefs of a lost age. It stands to reason that one must study climate theory in order to understand Bodin's political thought as a whole and his early modern biopolitical program in particular.⁶⁰²

⁶⁰² Bodin was by no means the last great thinker to embrace climate theory. Similar ideas would go on to reach their pinnacle in Montesquieu's 1748 work *De l'Esprit des Loix* (*The Spirit of the Laws*). Like Bodin, Montesquieu believed in the strong, yet adjustable physical influence that the distinct climates were supposed to have on human beings. In Montesquieu's case, the specific climates were thought to affect the "fibers" within the human body, which in turn led to diverse predispositions. While the baron agreed with Bodin (and disagreed with Aristotle) by stating that slavery was not good by nature, he did compromise by arguing that climate could be used to give at least some validation to the enslavement of those living in the hottest of regions, which seems to represent a clear step toward the birth of modern racism. Charles de Secondat de Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des loix: Ou du rapport que les Loix doivent avoir avec la Constitution de chaque Gouvernement, les Moeurs, le Climat, la Religion, le Commerce, &c: à quoi l'Auteur a ajouté Des recherches nouvelles sur les Loix Romaines touchant les Successions, sur les Loix Françoises, & sur les Loix Féodales*, 2 vols. (Geneva: Chez Barrillot & Fils, 1748), 14.1, 2, 7; See Diana J. Schaub, "Montesquieu on Slavery," *Perspectives on Political Science* 32, no. 2 (2005): 74.

7 THE BIOPOLITICAL ASPECTS OF A DEMONOLOGY

The European witch hunt is often perceived as something belonging to the so-called dark Middle Ages. However, medieval witch-hunting was rather insignificant compared to the series of persecutions during early modernity circa 1450 and 1750,⁶⁰³ which peaked between 1580 and 1630.⁶⁰⁴ Tens of thousands of people lost their lives.⁶⁰⁵ Previous estimates have claimed much higher numbers, but today it is believed that some 45,000⁶⁰⁶ to 50,000⁶⁰⁷ people were executed through official means, while extrajudicial lynchings were relatively rare.⁶⁰⁸ While some popular conceptions regarding these tragic events are unfounded, others do reflect the reality rather well: for example, torture was employed habitually in order to extract confessions.⁶⁰⁹ Some of the sentenced were burned alive but many were also executed by strangling or hanging (their bodies were burned only after their death).⁶¹⁰ A vast majority, up to 80 percent, of the victims were women.⁶¹¹ Older women and widows were targeted more than others.⁶¹²

⁶⁰³ Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edition (Harlow: Pearson, 2006), 1.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 207; Julian Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt* (London: Routledge, 2016), 27.

⁶⁰⁵ Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 1, 21–23.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁷ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 27.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 249; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 74.

⁶⁰⁹ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 206; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 80–85.

⁶¹⁰ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 217; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 93–94.

⁶¹¹ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 267; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 141. The English word “witch” (French *sorcier*, *sorcière*) tends to carry a feminine connotation; however, the term has a history of signifying all alleged practitioners of sorcery despite their sex. The Middle English word “wicche” did not specify the gender while its older forms “wicce” (fem.) and “wicca” (masc.) did. I use the word in a gender-neutral sense while keeping in mind that most of those who faced persecution were women. See *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “witch,” accessed January 20, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/witch>.

⁶¹² Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 274; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 1.

This was also the time of Bodin, who wrote a commanding book on witchcraft called *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (*On the Demon-mania of Witches*).⁶¹³ Interestingly enough, the 1580 publication of this work coincided perfectly with the beginning of the peak in European witchcraft prosecutions. As we know, Bodin has been immortalized due to his main work, the *République*, yet his second most widespread book, the *Démonomanie*, gets mentioned much less frequently⁶¹⁴ – that is, at least outside specific discussions concerning the witch hunt and its theorists.

Bodin’s infamous contribution to “demonology,” or the study of demons, is one of the most successful works of its kind.⁶¹⁵ It has even received the dubious honor of being compared to genre’s single most defining work, by being described as “the *Malleus maleficarum*⁶¹⁶ of the next hundred years.”⁶¹⁷ The *Démonomanie* may have provided incitement for the rapidly escalating persecutions, although no certainty of this exists.⁶¹⁸ Some have also suggested the opposite; the extremely radical nature of the work could have helped speed up the ongoing debate in a way that contributed to the relatively early end of witchcraft trials in France.⁶¹⁹ In general, the demonology books seem to have been influenced more by the hunt than the hunt was by the books;⁶²⁰ however, there may have been an occasional synergy between the theory and the practice.⁶²¹

This apparent anomaly in the celebrated Renaissance man’s oeuvre has puzzled many. The likes of Henri Baudrillart did not spare their words while discussing the absurd, fanatic, ridiculous, and detestable nature of the book, which he saw as a blemish in the Angevin’s legacy.⁶²² However, two factors may help explain why both works, the brilliant *République* and the unsettling *Démonomanie*, hold their place within his oeuvre. Firstly, as we have mentioned, the witch hunts were primarily an early modern occurrence, and they had very little to do with the “Dark Ages.” In a sense, Bodin was thus just as home writing about demons and witches as he was coming up with innovative theories concerning the commonwealth; even though some of his views were radical, he was still more or less like a fish in water – if there was ever a time to publish a

⁶¹³ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*.

⁶¹⁴ E. William Monter, *European Witchcraft* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969), 47.

⁶¹⁵ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 74.

⁶¹⁶ The 1486 book *Malleus maleficarum*, or *The Hammer of Witches* is the single most famous example of demonology ever written. It also served as an important point of reference for Bodin who cited Jacob Sprenger as the author. However, it has been argued that Heinrich Kramer (also known by the Latin name Institor; both of which mean “shopkeeper” or “peddler”) was the lone or at the very least principal author of the book. Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.2, 129; Henricus Institoris and Jacobus Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum* (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1487); Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 54.

⁶¹⁷ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 670.

⁶¹⁸ Pearl, introduction to *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, 9, 27.

⁶¹⁹ Pearl, “Humanism and Satanism,” 545–546.

⁶²⁰ Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, vii.

⁶²¹ Goodare, *The European Witch-Hunt*, 85.

⁶²² See Turchetti, “Jean Bodin”; Henri Baudrillart, *J. Bodin et son temps: Tableau des theories politiques et des idées économiques au seizième siècle* (Paris: Librairie de Guillaumin: 1853), 189.

manual on recognizing and persecuting witches, it was certainly around the turn of the sixteenth century.

Secondly, many of the outwardly dissimilar texts in Bodin's bibliography are, in fact, not as different as it may seem at first glance. Instead, they share a recognizable undercurrent of political urgency.⁶²³ This is also true with the case of sorcery, which the Angevin sees as a direct threat to the political order in the commonwealth.⁶²⁴ This distinctive tone renders his unconventional work a fascinating read for anyone interested in the history of political thought. The political undercurrent is also what justifies the inclusion of this chapter within this current work. It is also worth mentioning that such an approach seems to characterize all of the biopolitically charged ideas that we have discussed during the previous chapters: Bodin's populationism, his desire to reinstitute the ancient magistracy of censors, and his climate theory all display a certain sense of political urgency.

In this chapter, we discuss, firstly, some of the general and especially political issues that may have influenced the early modern European witch hunts and their intensity, at least in a secondary manner.⁶²⁵ Secondly, we examine Bodin's politically charged *Démonomanie*, which we compare to the (population-)political interpretations provided in the prevailing research literature and similar arguments witnessed elsewhere in the Angevin's oeuvre. Thirdly and finally, we consider the possibility of a biopolitical explanation as a partial reason behind his ardent desire to eliminate witches. In other words, we are looking to find whether or not the *Démonomanie* can be claimed to contain a distinct biopolitical element before modernity and the Foucauldian biopolitical era.

7.1 Why Were Witches Persecuted?

The question of why witches were persecuted has not received a definitive answer.⁶²⁶ There is, of course, no scientific evidence for the existence of magic; however, many of those who lived in Europe and its colonies during early modernity believed sincerely that both benevolent and malevolent forms of sorcery were practiced everywhere around them.⁶²⁷ There is little doubt that religious issues and superstitions were the most significant reason behind the

⁶²³ E. William Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 371–389.

⁶²⁴ See, for example, Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.4, 179, IV.1, 314, IV.5, 373.

⁶²⁵ Because my specific interests lie with Bodin's demonology, the current inquiry is limited to the witch hunt in early modern Europe. Therefore, I do not focus on the somewhat similar witch hunts that have taken place in other eras and settings. Because of our specific timeframe, I also omit the discussion concerning self-identified contemporary witches who view themselves as belonging to the same tradition as their early-modern counterparts.

⁶²⁶ Robin Briggs, "'Many Reasons Why': Witchcraft and the Problem of Multiple Explanation," in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*, eds. Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 49.

⁶²⁷ The Salem witch trials in the Providence of Massachusetts Bay of British America are probably the most famous example of colonial persecutions.

persecutions. Sorcery was believed to be a crime against God, which, in many cases, signified a pact with the Devil himself; these were despicable spiritual offenses during a puritan era that regarded personal piety as the paramount goal in life.⁶²⁸

“Do not allow a sorceress to live”⁶²⁹ was one of God’s ordinances for the Israelites – or so declared the European renditions of Exodus. Even though the common translation of the Hebrew word *mekhashshepneh* to “witch” instead of “poisoner” has been questioned by some, the idea that witches existed was out there, and the Bible seemed to communicate God’s unambiguous desire to see them killed.⁶³⁰ The book of Exodus is not an isolated example – the Greeks and Romans were equally aware of the problem of witchcraft: Plato acknowledged the existence of witches who were to be prosecuted and, in some cases, killed for their crimes.⁶³¹ The Romans also persecuted witches occasionally.⁶³²

As the witch hunts were starting to escalate, the bloody religious wars between the Catholics and the Protestants had just quietened down to a state of “trench warfare.”⁶³³ Unlike the state of active conflict, which actually tended to halt the persecutions, this state of “cold war” proved to be a suitable breeding ground for animosities toward perceived witches.⁶³⁴ Even though the opposing factions did not usually accuse each other of witchcraft directly, bitterness continued to run deep, which may have contributed to an intensified hunger for discipline during the ongoing pursuits toward achieving a godly state,⁶³⁵ which was also an equally omnipresent objective outside of the persecutions.⁶³⁶

7.1.1 Political Factors

The religious and superstitious elements alone may have been more than enough to spark the witch hunts, but an abundance of other possible factors could also have contributed to the persecutions and their intensity. Suggestions for possible (secondary) causes include but are not limited to ritualistic use of mind-altering substances, socio-economic tensions, mental illness or senility, changes in the climate such as the Little Ice Age, and mass hysteria.⁶³⁷ Many have argued that

⁶²⁸ Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 114–138.

⁶²⁹ Exod. 22:18.

⁶³⁰ Ibid, 120; Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 68, 80.

⁶³¹ Plato, *Laws*, 11.933b–e. Bodin was aware of Plato’s argument. See Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, 16.

⁶³² Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 32, 97. Interestingly enough, the desire to hunt witches seems to go hand in hand with a general interest in biopolitical governance – both were practiced during the antiquity and remained rather insignificant during the Middle Ages until they exploded into the scene in early modernity. Of course, only one of them became omnipresent in our current era.

⁶³³ Ibid, 159–164.

⁶³⁴ Ibid, 172.

⁶³⁵ Both demonologies and the witch hunt in general seemed to actually bring Catholics and Protestants closer together. Bodin, who was at least nominally Catholic, had his *Démonomanie* translated into Latin and German by Protestants. Ibid, 159–164.

⁶³⁶ Short dresses, certain forms of dance, and mixed bathing were frowned upon and even prohibited in many places. Ibid, 169–170.

⁶³⁷ Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 18, 110–134, 160–163, 192.

seeing deviants as witches may have provided scapegoats to blame for the unprecedented misfortunes.⁶³⁸ However, it would appear that this or any other single excuse alone cannot explain the complexity of the matter.⁶³⁹

The persecutions were more than a mere result of societal unrest or a means of gaining additional political control.⁶⁴⁰ However, it is important to realize that we are not dealing with an exclusively religious category. Instead, witchcraft was understood as a combination of heresy and actual physical harm, sometimes believed to carry an explicit political significance. There was thus a secular element to sorcery, which is emphasized by the fact that most cases were tried in secular courts.⁶⁴¹ In some sense, witchcraft was thus a crime among others, albeit still an extraordinary one.⁶⁴² The benefits that were believed to be gained through magic were also often exceedingly practical.⁶⁴³ Bodin's definition of a witch is befitting; according to him, she "is one who knowingly tries to accomplish something by diabolical means."⁶⁴⁴

I do not wish to reduce the entirety of the witch hunt to political reasons, nor do I think that it is possible in the first place. Nevertheless, we must focus on this aspect to better understand Bodin's explicitly political demonology. Indeed, there are those who have argued convincingly that the ongoing political changes in Europe affected the persecutions.⁶⁴⁵ Certain rulers seem to have shared Bodin's point of view and praised the hunts as a way of removing an alarming threat to the state; however, most prosecutions were not centrally led; they were instead handled by eager local tribunals, while high courts tended to have more restraint and, in many cases, steered away from the bloodshed.⁶⁴⁶ For example, France had eight local *parlements* led by a *de facto* central court located in Paris, which dismissed a high number of witchcraft sentences initiated by the lower tribunals.⁶⁴⁷

The fact that the witch hunt was not centrally led does not mean that the deaths of tens of thousands of people were coordinated by the peasants. Instead, most of the damage was done by a judicial system run by zealous local authorities

⁶³⁸ Briggs, "Many Reasons Why," 51; Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 283.

⁶³⁹ Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 554–556.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴¹ Goodare, *The European Witch-Hunt*, 52; Johannes Dillinger, "Politics, State-Building, and Witch-Hunting," in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 528; Brian P. Levack, "State-Building and Witch Hunting in Early Modern Europe," in *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Studies in Culture and Belief*, eds. Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 114; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 88–89.

⁶⁴² Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 190.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶⁴⁴ Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, I.1, 45 [29]. The page numbers of the 1593 French edition can be found bracketed.

⁶⁴⁵ See, for example, Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God: The Witch Hunt in Scotland* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 192–193.

⁶⁴⁶ Dillinger, "Politics, State-Building, and Witch-Hunting," 539–540; Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 185; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 96–103.

⁶⁴⁷ Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 97–98.

and endorsed by members of the elite.⁶⁴⁸ In a sense, it may be argued that the hunt originated from both below and above. That being said, the characteristics associated with witches and the key motivations behind prosecuting them were dissimilar for the different “societal strata.” While they did share at least some notable similarities, the peasants were probably more worried about the real-life consequences that seemed to be taking place within their villages, whereas the educated people were more likely concerned about abstract, religiously motivated ideas such as the pact with the Devil.⁶⁴⁹

Personal relationships within communities may have sparked persecutions. “Mass panics” were behind most executions instead of personal quarrels, but tensions between neighbors could have provided additional tinder to the flames.⁶⁵⁰ It is possible that the hard socio-economic climate contributed to the escalation of village disputes,⁶⁵¹ while the growing pressure might have caused accusations, especially toward those who already had a bad reputation.⁶⁵² A sudden tragedy such as the loss of crops or an outbreak of disease may have turned the spotlight toward these suspicious and quarrelsome characters. While it would have been possible to use the witch scares as an excuse for getting rid of undesirable neighbors without any actual evidence of their wrongdoings,⁶⁵³ the majority of allegations were most likely sincere.⁶⁵⁴ When things went wrong, it was easy to blame witches.⁶⁵⁵

It was probably just as easy to draw a connection between the forces of evil and larger political problems, including sedition, religious conflicts, inflation, poverty, and the influx of changes ensuing from the first steps of the modern state and its nascent form of capitalism.⁶⁵⁶ As we mentioned previously, it is true that some of the developments toward a more centralized state actually halted the hunts instead of inciting them further. There were also fewer persecutions in larger cities, perhaps due to a more profound level of governing and fewer opportunities to perceive alleged mischiefs such as the death of animals or the destruction of crops.⁶⁵⁷

Meanwhile, other aspects of political progress may have had the exact opposite effect. It has been argued that some of the other early steps (and missteps) of the modern state allowed the hunt to reach its peak.⁶⁵⁸ Indeed, even though somewhat similar (although far less severe) waves of witch-hunting had taken place during less-developed times, this particularly deadly series of persecutions seems to have been ushered in partly by the ongoing societal

⁶⁴⁸ Briggs, “Many Reasons Why,” 54; Goodare, *The European Witch-Hunt*, 257, 371; Levack, “State-Building and Witch Hunting in Early Modern Europe,” 111.

⁶⁴⁹ See Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 10–13, 24–25.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, 92–93; Dillinger, “Politics, State-Building, and Witch-Hunting,” 544.

⁶⁵³ Briggs, “Many Reasons Why,” 57.

⁶⁵⁴ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 115.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 101; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 179.

⁶⁵⁶ Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 164.

⁶⁵⁷ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 253.

⁶⁵⁸ Dillinger, “Politics, State-Building, and Witch-Hunting,” 533; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 102.

change.⁶⁵⁹ Furthermore, the hunts may have helped strengthen communities during a time of great division;⁶⁶⁰ some have even argued that they were motivated partly by underlying wishes to homogenize the people.⁶⁶¹ Whatever the case may be, it is safe to say that the political change seems to have affected the persecutions, which, in return, had a corresponding influence on the surrounding political order.⁶⁶²

7.1.2 Population-Political Issues

The number of people in Europe had begun to increase after a considerable decline, even though epidemics and scarcities still continued to play a constant role in people's everyday lives; meanwhile, modern capitalism was starting to take its initial form.⁶⁶³ These issues provided nutritious soil for the distinctly modern population-political programs that would begin to emerge shortly. As we have mentioned, the surrounding political conditions may have affected the intensity of the hunt. Since poverty and hunger were on the rise, people were perhaps more willing to attempt to improve their lives through magical means, while their neighbors were probably more eager to suspect and accuse them of doing so.⁶⁶⁴

There is little doubt that population-political factors such as local overpopulation, inflation, economic hardships, scarcities, famines, plagues, pestilences, crop failures, the death of animals, climatic deterioration, and the high mortality rate of children provided fuel for the persecutions, either directly or indirectly through personal disputes that would contribute to later allegations.⁶⁶⁵ "Political conflicts made witches,"⁶⁶⁶ and in this sense not only Bodin's explicitly political take on sorcery, but instead "all witchcraft prosecutions were political."⁶⁶⁷ It seems clear they involved power relations in the broad Foucauldian sense, but some cases they also contained elements of political power struggles understood in the more narrow meaning of the word.⁶⁶⁸ It may be argued that sorcery, just like all human actions, was always tied to power, be it "political, religious, economic, sexual, psychological."⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁵⁹ Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 136–137.

⁶⁶⁰ Briggs, "Many Reasons Why," 56.

⁶⁶¹ Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994), 146–147. See also Robert Muchembled, "The Witches of Cambrésis: The Acculturation of the Rural World in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Religion and the People, 800–1700*, ed. James Obelkevich (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 221–276.

⁶⁶² See Dillinger, "Politics, State-Building, and Witch-Hunting," 528–547.

⁶⁶³ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 89; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 136.

⁶⁶⁴ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 278; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 158–159.

⁶⁶⁵ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 241–244; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 274.

⁶⁶⁶ Dillinger, "Politics, State-Building, and Witch-Hunting," 544.

⁶⁶⁷ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 226.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁶⁶⁹ Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 63.

Not all magic was malevolent. The most widespread forms of so-called paganist white magic had to do with healing and achieving love, whether in the form of marriage or sexual intercourse.⁶⁷⁰ However, while the practice of white sorcery was often tolerated to a larger extent than the obviously malevolent kind, the well-wishing witches would not always succeed in achieving their desired outcome, and such failures could easily lead to accusations of their bad intentions.⁶⁷¹ Health problems were also sometimes blamed on witches, who were even occasionally credited with spreading the plague.⁶⁷² All of this may have contributed to the already vulnerable position of women within early modern societies. The tasks that were open to them were virtually always tied to providing care and support for material life. Women healed people, assisted in births, took care of children, and prepared food – all of these activities seemed to offer a close connection to the magical world.⁶⁷³

The witch was often depicted as a powerful woman who tampered with foodstuffs and brought illness and death to people, especially young children.⁶⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the number of unmarried women was increasing due to endless wars and continuous outbreaks of disease; poor unmarried women and sexually experienced widows seem to have been particularly easy targets for accusations.⁶⁷⁵ Some have also argued that slaying non-conformist females may have acted as a way of making society more uniform, at the very least in an unconscious manner.⁶⁷⁶ The bottom line is that witchcraft accusations were noticeably gendered, and while magic was believed to exist virtually everywhere in the early modern world, its masculine forms received much more tolerance.⁶⁷⁷

Befitting the universal trend, most of the sexually charged accusations were also directed toward women, who were often seen as carnal beings who needed to keep their sexuality, a frightening form of feminine power, under strict auto-control at all times.⁶⁷⁸ Meanwhile, there seems to have been a general interest in sex, which was becoming the target of several governmental approaches during the sixteenth century.⁶⁷⁹ A new form of social discipline was fascinated by matters such as prostitution and drinking; however, this approach was not merely repressive.⁶⁸⁰ Indeed, all the evidence seems to suggest that sexuality was becoming to be policed at an unprecedented level, at least compared to the Middle Ages.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁰ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 36, 287–288; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 117–118.

⁶⁷¹ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 36, 287–288; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 117–118.

⁶⁷² Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 139.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, 146–149; Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 91, 275–277.

⁶⁷⁴ Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 146–149.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 156; Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 276.

⁶⁷⁶ Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 163.

⁶⁷⁷ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 288.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 309–310.

⁶⁷⁹ Lyndal Roper has argued that Foucault's understanding of modern sexuality ought to be broadened in order to include early modernity. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil*, 9, 74, 156.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁶⁸¹ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 284.

Sex was also virtually omnipresent in folk stories and the notable works of demonology. Witches were said to gather at secret assemblies or Sabbaths where they worshipped the Devil, kissed his anus, danced around naked, had orgies, and copulated with demons (which was sometimes believed to result in the birth of a child conceived with stolen semen).⁶⁸² Even though there are depictions of demonic births, most of these sexual relations seem unproductive. Witchcraft was also seen as a cause of impotence and infertility.⁶⁸³ Furthermore, witches were said to kill infants and eat their flesh.⁶⁸⁴ This side of the scale seems to heavily outweigh the rare instances of corrupted reproduction.

The end of the early modern witch-hunting in Europe and its colonies⁶⁸⁵ coincided with the decline of death penalties and torture, the commencement of the scientific revolution, the newfound stability of the state, diminishing heed for godliness, and the rise of new institutions of control and care.⁶⁸⁶ Ultimately, witches seemed to lose all of their importance. It may perhaps be argued that this problem, which arose partly from a series of population-politically significant crises, was also halted in part due to the escalation of the increasingly elaborate biopolitical mechanisms that managed to provide much more wellbeing and security compared to the essentially pointless persecutions.

7.2 Bodin's Demonology

Foucault references Bodin's demonology briefly in his 1979–1980 Collège de France lectures, *Du gouvernement des vivants* (*On the Government of the Living*).⁶⁸⁷ Here, he brings up the previously mentioned, seemingly paradoxical divide in Bodin's oeuvre – the Angevin was both an innovator of political thought (“one of the theorists of the new rationality that was to preside over the art of government”)⁶⁸⁸ and the author of a notorious book on witchcraft. Foucault's explanation for this enigma is that Bodin flourished in a time when new political theories were just starting to replace magical forms of knowledge such as divination, which still endured in both “the lower strata ... and in the prince's entourage and court.”⁶⁸⁹ Despite Bodin's innovativeness, he still needed to navigate both of these waters.

On a tangent, Foucault then moves on to mention that there are some (whose names he chooses to omit) who believe that Bodin's interest in sorcery

⁶⁸² Ibid, 10, 42, 69, 77–78.

⁶⁸³ Ibid, 38, 42, 304.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid, 42, 77.

⁶⁸⁵ However, somewhat similarly motivated lynchings have taken place in Sub-Saharan Africa during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Ibid, 376–377; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 300–303.

⁶⁸⁶ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 328–329, 335.

⁶⁸⁷ Michel Foucault, *Du gouvernement des vivants*, ed. Michel Senellart (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2012).

⁶⁸⁸ Michel Foucault, *On the Government of the Living: Lectures at the Collège de France 1979–1980*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 10.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

was actually driven by his underlying desire to augment the size of the population in order to fulfill the future needs of the capitalist system that would assume its full form a few centuries later. The elimination of sorcery would help achieve this goal, since witches were often depicted as abortionists who hindered the rate of reproduction.⁶⁹⁰ This idea seems absolutely preposterous to Foucault, who commences to ironize it.

Now I know that there are people – their names and nationality are not important – who say: yes, of course, if Bodin does these two things, if he is both theorist of *raison d'État* and the great caster out of demon-mania, both demonologist and theorist of the State, this is quite simply because nascent capitalism needed labor and witches were also abortionists, it was a question of removing the checks to demography in order to be able to provide capital with the labor it needed in its factories of the nineteenth century. You can see that the argument is not entirely convincing (it is true that I caricature it).⁶⁹¹

It is apparent that Foucault had absolutely no interest in explaining the urgency of eliminating witches through the concept of biopolitics, which he utilized in some of his earlier, better-known efforts. While Foucault ridicules the attempt of reading Bodin as a mastermind who was somehow able to predict the requirements of factories of the distant future, it should be noted that he does not deny the Angevin's role as a theorist of *raison d'État* and the new art of government. This is important because these techniques make up one of the historical strata of governmentality, which can be understood as precursors to the biopolitical system that would eventually emerge during the modern era. It is also important to mention that while it is rather obvious that Bodin knew nothing of the machines and plants that would revolutionize industry during modern times, he still wished to augment the number of people for other political reasons.

Bodin's book on witchcraft is undeniably political. Several authors have suggested this as an explanation of why the famed innovator of political theory was so keen on writing about witches and demons. E. William Monter has argued that the Angevin discusses the topics of sorcery and inflation⁶⁹² with a corresponding scholarly vigor and, furthermore, that he regards them as equally alarming threats to the commonwealth.⁶⁹³ Inspired by this astute observation, Heinsohn and Steiger add a third item to the list of political threats: the diminishing population.⁶⁹⁴ The Germans go on to argue (without mentioning Foucault or biopolitics explicitly) that Bodin's important political works, including the *Démonomanie*, display a stark opposition to issues such as birth control, abortion, and infanticide, and that the pro-natalist Angevin represents a mercantilist promotion of augmenting the number of citizens after a time of

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

⁶⁹² Bodin discusses the issue of inflation in a response he wrote to the king's advisor Jean de Malestroit's financial theories. See Bodin, *La réponse de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit*.

⁶⁹³ Monter, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 371–389.

⁶⁹⁴ Heinsohn and Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 49; see also a condensed article version Heinsohn and Steiger, "Birth Control."

notable de-population.⁶⁹⁵ Since Heinsohn and Steiger had been making similar arguments in French a few months prior to Foucault's lecture, it is quite possible that they were the target of his mockery.⁶⁹⁶

Whatever the case may be, Heinsohn and Steiger decide to go even further by claiming that Bodin was not alone and that the larger witch hunt was also motivated by similar plans of repopulating Europe by combating birth control and dealing with the problem of midwives who held all the secrets to reproduction.⁶⁹⁷ However, while we are fully aware that Bodin had political reasons for increasing the number of people, which he saw as the greatest wealth of the commonwealth, the theory of a wider conspiracy faces two major difficulties. Firstly, contrary to popular belief, it would appear that midwives were not usually persecuted outside of the demonology books.⁶⁹⁸

Secondly, as we have mentioned, the witch hunt was not centrally led, and whenever high courts did assume a more pivotal role, the prosecutions tended to lose at least some of their steam.⁶⁹⁹ It seems practically impossible that the various local tribunals across the continent would have formed a universal conspiracy - especially one that did not involve the central courts. It is true that population-politically significant concerns such as the fear of death, infertility, or barrenness, and local depopulation may have generated sparks for the persecutions. However, it seems unlikely that the isolated communities were driven by the desire to increase the population of the state, let alone the entire continent (although the elimination of enough abortionists and murderers would eventually lead to such an outcome). Even if we argued that the scheme to augment the population at large was mostly unconscious, there are surely other, more significant causes for the hunts. Again, this is not to argue against the fact that Bodin made explicit wishes about apprehending abortionist witches and stopping sorcery-related birth control in order to prevent depopulation on a universal scale.⁷⁰⁰

On a somewhat related note, Silvia Federici has claimed that Foucault is mistaken to claim that the modern discourses concerning reproduction and population growth coincide with the famine of the eighteenth century.⁷⁰¹ According to her, we can clearly witness these topics appearing in the sixteenth and seventeenth century population-political debates, for instance, in Bodin's political thought.⁷⁰² Federici continues by making an argument that is somewhat reminiscent of Heinsohn and Steiger's: according to her, there is a clear

⁶⁹⁵ Heinsohn and Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 6-33.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid, 3, n. 1 provides a list of the authors' previous works on similar topics starting with Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger, "Jean Bodin, le 'Génie universel des Temps Modernes' ou: Le vrai maître penseur: Neuf thèses démographiques pour le symposium 'Sciences humaines et histoire.'" Symposium paper, published in *Diskussionsbeiträge zur Politischen Ökonomie*, University of Bremen, September 1979.

⁶⁹⁷ Heinsohn and Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 54-56.

⁶⁹⁸ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 277.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid, 371; Briggs, "Many Reasons Why," 54; Levack, "State-Building and Witch Hunting in Early Modern Europe," 111.

⁷⁰⁰ See, for example Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.1, 125, II.3, 129, IV.5, 385, II.4, 179.

⁷⁰¹ Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 86.

⁷⁰² Ibid.

connection between the witch hunt and the population-politically charged matters that were taking place at the same time, including the decline of the population, the lingering fear concerning women's control over reproduction, and the Satanic killings of children.⁷⁰³

As we can see, arguments have been exchanged for and against a population-political reading of the witch hunt in general and Bodin's demonology in particular. One thing seems clear – the *Démonomanie* does not appear to be in any sort of a conflict with the *République*, despite the seemingly dissimilar subject matter of the two books. Instead, many of the ideas Bodin puts forward in these works seem to coincide more or less perfectly. They both seem to emphasize the urgency of putting a stop to the turmoil that was taking place within the commonwealth and the need to remove all unnecessary obstacles to reproduction and political harmony. The biopolitically charged issues are not Bodin's sole incentives for persecuting witches. Nevertheless, this does not diminish their crucial importance. While the larger phenomenon of witch-hunting may have also been roused by population-politically significant concerns, this reason alone does not succeed in explaining the intricacy of this complex series of events.

7.2.1 Sex, Infanticide, and Abortion

Like most aspects of the witch hunt, the *Démonomanie* is also riddled with sex. The tone of the work is set by Bodin's very first legal example, the case of "the witch of Ribemont," Jeanne Harvillier, introduced at the beginning of the preface and referenced repeatedly throughout the book.⁷⁰⁴ Bodin, who was working for the crown in the nearby town of Laon, knew this 1578 case by heart since he had been summoned to attend the trial in order to provide his counsel. Harvillier was claimed to have had sex with the Devil in the form of a tall, dark man. The accused's mother, also a witch, had acquainted the two when Jeanne was a twelve-year-old child. Later in her life, Harvillier would have sex with the Devil as her husband was sleeping beside her. She would also go on to commit additional sexual acts at the witches' assembly.

Harvillier's case reads like a checklist for the witches' most common crimes; in addition to her sexual misdeeds, she confessed to inflicting disease and killing both people and animals. She was deemed guilty and was burned alive at the age of 50. This was no isolated incident. The male- or female-form demons called *incubae* and *succubae* were often claimed to participate in sexual acts with people.⁷⁰⁵ Many of these encounters were characterized by depictions of cold semen, as is seen, for example, with the case of Harvillier.⁷⁰⁶ This detail seems to highlight the fact that the demons were often thought to be unable to impregnate a woman without the use of stolen sperm.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰³ Ibid, 86–87.

⁷⁰⁴ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, 3–5.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid, 14, II.7, 207–213.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ See also Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 301.

Sex is also at the epicenter of another harmful form of witchcraft; Bodin seems extremely alarmed by the rapidly increasing sorcery connected to sexual impotence and infertility.⁷⁰⁸ According to his sources, there are over fifty ways of performing a spell called “tying a codpiece-string [*lier l’esguillete*; sometimes known as a ligature].”⁷⁰⁹ This was a somewhat common magical ritual that could be used to affect several aspects of sexual intercourse.⁷¹⁰ Even children were caught red-handed trying to cast these horrible spells. A special piece of thread could be tied in a way that would cause infertility without affecting sexual performance in any other manner. Alternatively, the same string could be used to achieve a negative effect on one of the partners’ sexual performance, which was believed to act as a pathway to adultery and the eventual destruction of the marriage. Similar knots could also supposedly serve as a form of long-lasting birth control. Bodin describes visible boils that would appear in the tied string as signs of the unborn children.⁷¹¹ However, when the couple was freed from the spell, they were again able to produce beautiful children.⁷¹²

Why would witches or the Devil desire such effects? Bodin gives several answers to this question: as mentioned, magic could be used to remove the love between married people and make them act in an impious manner. However, the Devil had another, more ultimate goal in mind; he was seeking to decimate the entire humankind (“*genre humain*”).⁷¹³ Of course, preventing people from begetting children is one of the most obvious means of achieving such an objective – second only to simply killing them. Witches were not shying away from either of these two methods. While the Devil wished to cease procreation (“*empescher la procreation du genre humain*”)⁷¹⁴ in order to exterminate humankind, he still incited sexual acts seen as unnatural, sinful, or unproductive, such as sodomy, adultery, and demonic intercourse.

Bodin’s opposition to Satan’s alleged plans could not have been more rigorous. The Angevin argued that the prevention of human procreation (for example, through the previously mentioned cod-piece string spells) did not differ from the cruel act of cutting children’s throats in any shape or form – both of these crimes were to be considered murder in an equal sense (“*celuy n’est pas moins homicide, qui empesche la procreation des enfans, que s’il leur couppoit la gorge*”).⁷¹⁵ The Angevin stayed consistent with the claim that the Devil was out to destroy humankind and that he should, therefore, be understood as an enemy of both God and the human race – he repeats similar statements at least half a dozen times throughout the book.⁷¹⁶

⁷⁰⁸ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, IV.5, 386.

⁷⁰⁹ Bodin, *On the Demon-mania of Witches*, II.1, 98 [125].

⁷¹⁰ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.1, 125–129.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁷¹² *Ibid.*

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, II.3, 129, IV.5, 385.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, II.2, 130–131.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, IV.5, 385

⁷¹⁶ See *ibid.*, 13, II.1, 157, II.4, 177–178, III.5, 288, IV.2, 337, IV.5, 370–371.

Bodin also weighs heavily on abortion.⁷¹⁷ According to him, there is never a witches' assembly without their distinct form of dancing, which makes "men frenzied and women abort [*les danses des Sorciers rendent les hommes furieux, & font avorter les femmes*]." ⁷¹⁸ He specifies the controversial Late Renaissance dance the volta (French: *la volte*; Italian: *la volta*), which he claims to have been introduced from Italy to France by witches. This risqué couple's dance was said to involve "insolent and lewd movements" ⁷¹⁹ (including a sequence where the woman performed a jump assisted by her partner while both were revolving in a close embrace) and a curse that led to "countless number of murders and abortions [*meutres & aduortemens*]." ⁷²⁰ Bodin proceeded to emphasize the extraordinary political significance of this problem by stating that it was "a matter of the highest consequence for a state, and something one should prevent in the most rigorous ways." ⁷²¹ These issues were not simply violations of the law of God; they were also a matter of paramount importance for the commonwealth. It is important to mention that Bodin's wrath was not limited to a single form of cursed dancing, since there were other magical ways of terminating pregnancies. In one example, a witch

confessed to having killed seven children in their mother's womb; also that he had caused all the livestock of that household to abort. When asked by what means, he said that he had buried a certain animal, which is not necessary to name, beneath the sill of the door. It was removed and the miscarriages stopped in the whole household.⁷²²

Witchcraft trials in France grew and decreased together with the prosecution of crimes related to sex and reproduction, such as adultery, sodomy, incest, and infanticide.⁷²³ For example, infanticide was rarely punished during the Middle Ages.⁷²⁴ Bodin's fervent approach serves as an unmistakable indication of the change of attitude. It is imperative to mention that the outlooks regarding birth control and the state's role in limiting it expressed in the *Démonomanie* are in line with those witnessed in the *République*, where Bodin calls for governmental interventions into the question of reproduction and states that one should never be afraid of having too many citizens in the commonwealth.⁷²⁵

7.2.2 Bringing Death to Men, Animals, and Crops

Bodin sums up the witches' crimes in a fifteen-part list toward the end of the book.⁷²⁶ However, he has already familiarized the reader with most of these categories by providing countless examples of each throughout the work. Many

⁷¹⁷ Ibid, II.4, 178–179.

⁷¹⁸ Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, II.4, 120 [179].

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ Ibid.

⁷²² Ibid, II.8, 138 [224].

⁷²³ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 193.

⁷²⁴ Ibid, 284.

⁷²⁵ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, VI.I, 631; Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.2, 705. See also Heinsohn and Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 13.

⁷²⁶ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, IV.5, 366–372.

of the listed crimes pose a direct and physical threat to people's lives. In fact, only a third of them can be described as solely religious: these five have to do with committing treason by renouncing God in order to align oneself with the Devil, swearing in his name, and promising him children (which could also lead to real-life consequences). The other ten crimes have a much more grounded nature – they all seem to have a direct impact on either people's everyday lives or society at large: 5) killing children in a human sacrifice, 6) human sacrifice of children from the womb, 7) luring others to witchcraft, 9) incestuous relationships, 10) killing people, 11) cannibalism, another of the Devil's tricks toward the destruction of the human race, 12) using poisons and spells to commit murder, 13) killing livestock, 14) causing famines, sterility, and destruction of crops, and finally, 15) sexual intercourse with the Devil.

As we have established previously, sex and reproduction play an enormous role in Bodin's demonology, and the list of witches' crimes reflects this fact.⁷²⁷ An even larger portion of the crimes have to do with ways of negating the life of humans and especially infants; Bodin claims that "there is nothing more normal for witches than to murder children."⁷²⁸ He also believes that sorcery indirectly affects human life by destroying food sources, which may then contribute to famines and eventual deaths.

The various case examples that Bodin provides throughout the book are often compilations of several crimes, as we saw in the case of Harvillier. One of the confessions cited in the book concerns a witches' gathering that included sexual acts with male- and female-form demons and "their kind of dancing,"⁷²⁹ which we know to be connected with frenzy, death, and abortions. After the witches' Sabbath was over, "each one took powders to bring death to men, animals and crops."⁷³⁰ Based on the Angevin's depictions, sorcery can be seen as an ever-multiplying threat that cannot be left unchecked. If witches are allowed to corrupt more people to join their ranks, they could eventually end up posing a large-scale threat to entire commonwealths and even the entire human race itself.

There are two notable (sub-)crimes that do not merit their own entry in the fifteen-part list, but which are, nevertheless, mentioned several times throughout the book: the creation of storms and the act of spreading disease. Changing the weather in order to make tempests, rain, hail, or lightning is clearly connected to the destruction of produce in a large area.⁷³¹ It is, therefore, in a sense encompassed by crime number fourteen, destroying crops and other sources of food.⁷³² The second unlisted crime has to do with spreading illnesses. Bodin

⁷²⁷ Heinsohn and Steiger note that many of these crimes have a connection to birth control. See Heinsohn and Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 41-42. However, their argument can be taken even further; up to two-thirds of the crimes have some kind of biopolitical significance.

⁷²⁸ Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, IV.2, 182 [327].

⁷²⁹ Ibid. III.5, 160 [288].

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

⁷³¹ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.4, 172, II.8, 219.

⁷³² Sometimes witches had nothing to do with the weather, but the Devil still tricked them into believing that they were the cause of some foreseen disaster. Ibid., II.8, 291-220.

claims that crippledness, deformity, and forms of sickness such as leprosy⁷³³ and even the plague⁷³⁴ can be inflicted by magic. The Devil can also make people go mad.⁷³⁵ Hence, witchcraft is seen as a concrete medical risk associated with some of the most horrible diseases known to humankind. Part of this unlisted crime seems to fall under category number ten, killing people, and perhaps also into category number twelve, using poisons and spells to kill.

Bodily health is an important topic for other reasons, as well. Sometimes witches would align themselves with the Devil in order to be cured of an illness.⁷³⁶ Magic users were occasionally portrayed as healers, and Bodin agrees that they were sometimes able to remedy diseases that were caused by magic in the first place.⁷³⁷ This kind of restorative sorcery comes with a catch – the curse that caused the disease is always transferred into another body. Moreover, the Devil is always looking to benefit from such exchanges: if an old man is healed, a young boy will get sick instead of him and, reflecting the misogyny of the time, if a woman is healed, a man will be struck by the same illness in her place. According to Bodin, this is caused by the fact that the Devil can only perform good deeds if he is able to achieve a greater evil by doing so, while the exact opposite of this is true for God.⁷³⁸

7.2.3 Political Issues in Bodin's Demonology

Bodin believes that witches and the Devil, who granted them all of their powers,⁷³⁹ are responsible for killing and cannibalizing. They also prevent and terminate pregnancies with the ultimate goal of decimating the human race. The Angevin demands rigorous political intervention against these evil and harmful practices and goes as far as to call this a matter of maximum importance for the commonwealth. Witches need to be either rehabilitated or eliminated; punishing them would put an end to God's wrath while also producing a plethora of beneficial effects for the commonwealth. It is thus of paramount importance to bring witches

to repentance and to cure them, or at least if they will not change their ways, to reduce their number, surprising the wicked and preserving the elect. It is therefore, a very salutary thing for the whole body of a state diligently to search out and severely punish witches.⁷⁴⁰

There are tangible consequences for any commonwealth that refuses to tackle this serious problem with the attention that it deserves. Bodin states that

⁷³³ Ibid, II.8, 277, IV.2, 327.

⁷³⁴ Ibid, IV.4, 357.

⁷³⁵ Ibid, III.6, 305.

⁷³⁶ Ibid, II.4, 164.

⁷³⁷ Ibid, III.2, 251–252.

⁷³⁸ Ibid, III.2, 254–255.

⁷³⁹ Bodin argues that the ointments and powders the witches used to perform spells did not have any inherent powers but, instead, received their magical properties from the Devil, whose might was derived ultimately from God. See, for example, *ibid*, II.4, 169.

⁷⁴⁰ Bodin, *On the Demon-mania of Witches*, IV.1, 173–174 [314].

those who let witches escape or who do not carry out their punishment with utmost rigor, can be assured that they will be abandoned by God to the mercy of witches. And the country which tolerates them will be struck by plagues, famines, and wars.⁷⁴¹

Furthermore, witches tend to lure princes in particular. If they were to succeed in their mission, it would be easy to overwhelm entire commonwealths with sedition and bloody civil wars.⁷⁴² Bodin's message could not be clearer: commonwealths that get rid of witches will flourish while those that neglect this duty will face want, sickness, and violence. Sorcery equals death and political decay.

Bodin states that punishing witches may save innocent people "from being harmed by the wicked, as plague victims and lepers infect the healthy."⁷⁴³ In other words, thinning the number of witches allows good people to live unaffected by literal and figurative forms of sickness. Witches are depicted as a disease that lingers within the commonwealth and, furthermore, as infectious⁷⁴⁴ vermin that multiply constantly.⁷⁴⁵ We are once again approaching the domain of state racism⁷⁴⁶ and the idea of purging the commonwealth from internal contamination in order to safeguard it as a whole. We have, of course, diagnosed a similar logic with Bodin's call for the reinstatement of the ancient magistracy of censors, which he would put in charge of driving away the harmful vermin, parasites, and idlers who had a corruptive effect on decent folk.⁷⁴⁷ Bodin motivates both of these purges with a corresponding urgency to eradicate undesirable individuals who are believed to pose an imminent danger to the health of the commonwealth.

7.2.4 Witchcraft and the Physical Human Body

As we have witnessed, most of the magic described in the *Démonomanie* is tied to the material human body. Bodin calls for the physical destruction of witches whose actions he believes to cause concrete diseases such as incurable leprosy.⁷⁴⁸ There are a plethora of examples concerning the corporeality of magic. Witchcraft could be used to make the penis retreat inside the body,⁷⁴⁹ and the codpiece-strings used in order to produce sexual infertility or impotence could also be used to prevent their victim from urinating, which would often result in their death.⁷⁵⁰ Witches were also said to have turned a victim's chin upside down in a hideous manner and to have made a woman's belly inflate as if she was carrying triplets.⁷⁵¹ The physical dimension of the Angevin's demonology is highlighted

⁷⁴¹ Ibid, IV.5, 218 [401].

⁷⁴² Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, IV.5, 393.

⁷⁴³ Bodin, *On the Demon-mania of Witches*, IV.5, 203 [365].

⁷⁴⁴ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, IV.5, 370.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid, II.4, 165.

⁷⁴⁶ See Foucault, "Il faut défendre la société", 228.

⁷⁴⁷ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 840-841; see chapter five of this current work.

⁷⁴⁸ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.8, 227.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid, II.1, 129.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid, II.1, 127-128.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid, II.8, 226-227.

even further by his suggestion that even demons themselves were at least somewhat corporeal.⁷⁵²

Even though Bodin's conception of witchcraft is connected to several physical conditions and real-life diseases, he refuses to recognize it as a solely natural phenomenon. The Dutch physician Johann Weyer⁷⁵³ (also known as Wier), Bodin's contemporary and a notable critic of the persecutions, attempted to explain the issue away as a sickness caused by excessive melancholy, which seemed to be found most commonly in harmless old women.⁷⁵⁴ Bodin attempts to dismantle this and other arguments in a separate section of the *Démonomanie* dedicated solely to refuting Weyer.⁷⁵⁵ Not only does the physician's stance belittle the perils of witchcraft, but Bodin also thinks that his arguments themselves make no sense whatsoever; according to ancient knowledge, women, who were believed to be naturally cold and wet, represented the exact opposite of melancholia, which was depicted as a hot and dry temperament.⁷⁵⁶ Non-excessive melancholy was also associated with wisdom, composedness, and contemplation; qualities which, according to Bodin's misogynistic mind, were literally as distant from the female sex as fire is from ice.⁷⁵⁷

Furthermore, Bodin argues that natural reasons such as melancholy or epilepsy⁷⁵⁸ could not be used to explain reports claiming that unlearned women could speak Greek, Latin, or Hebrew when they became possessed.⁷⁵⁹ The Angevin continues by arguing that the natural rationalizations were also unable to explain the fact that witches' bodies had been proven to travel long distances in an unnatural manner; ⁷⁶⁰ firstly, there was the fact that people seemed to disappear inexplicably during the night in order to attend witches' Sabbaths that were occasionally held extremely far away from their homes. Secondly, Bodin

⁷⁵² Ibid, I, 7; See Lloyd, *Jean Bodin*, 175.

⁷⁵³ Weyer was a student of the physician and occult author Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, who wrote the infamous book *Of Occult Philosophy In Three Books (De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres)*. Agrippa, whom Bodin called "the master sorcerer [*le maistre Sorcier*]" was also the explicitly mentioned source of inspiration for fictional characters such as Doctor Faustus and Victor Frankenstein. See Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres* (Cologne: n.p., 1533); Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, I.5, 92; Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, in *Doctor Faustus*, ed. John D. Jump (London: Routledge, 1965), 1.1, 54; Monter, *European Witchcraft*, 37; Pearl, introduction to *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, 16, 26. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed. Maurice Hindle (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 28–29.

⁷⁵⁴ Johann Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum, et incantationibus ac ueneficijs: Libri V* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1563), 3–16.

⁷⁵⁵ Jean Bodin, "Réfutation des opinions de Jean Wier," in *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (Antwerp: Jean Keerbergh, 1593), 401–468. Interestingly enough, Bodin seems to have drawn heavily from Weyer's texts without crediting his sources. Christian Martin "Bodin's Reception of Johann Weyer in *De la démonomanie des sorciers*," in *The Reception of Bodin*, ed. Howell A. Lloyd (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 117–135.

⁷⁵⁶ Jean Bodin, "Réfutation des opinions de Jean Wier," 416–418.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁸ The early Greeks believed that epilepsy was a spiritual condition. It was even called the "sacred disease" before a treatise credited to Hippocrates contested this idea. Hippocrates, *The Sacred Disease*, in *Hippocrates*, trans. W. H. S. Jones, vol. II (London, William Heinemann, 1923), 127–183.

⁷⁵⁹ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.3, 159.

⁷⁶⁰ Bodin, "Réfutation des opinions de Jean Wier," 431–432.

reads Matthew 4:1–11 and Luke 4:1–13 as evidence that demonic transportation of human beings is indeed possible. According to the two Evangelists, Satan had taken Jesus, in the form of a real man, to the top of a temple and to a mountain (or an unspecified high place, depending on the Gospel) while trying to tempt him.⁷⁶¹

Bodin left his mark on many debates within the genre of demonology. One of his most controversial contributions has to do with a strong claim that some people could assume the physical form of beasts.⁷⁶² The Angevin dedicates a complete chapter to the curious topic of the lycanthrope (*lukánthrōpos*, “wolf-man”) and other forms of bodily transformation. According to him, werewolves⁷⁶³ were rather similar to regular witches: they killed and ate people, including children, and performed sexual acts in their animal form.⁷⁶⁴ Stories of shapeshifters were often connected to the witchcraft question as a marginal side note, and the elites may have found them especially intriguing because several ancient authorities had written about them.⁷⁶⁵ For example, Bodin refers to sources such as *The Odyssey* where the witch Circe turns the bodies of men into pigs without altering their minds.⁷⁶⁶ While some believed that the demonic flight did not take place in physical reality, almost everybody seemed to agree that human shapeshifting was a mere illusion – Bodin believed strongly in the corporeality of both phenomena⁷⁶⁷ and was criticized heavily for his unorthodox opinion.⁷⁶⁸

Finally, it should be noted that these physical crimes called for physical punishments. Bodin found it absurd that witches, who ought to be seen as enemies of not only God but also the human race,⁷⁶⁹ did not always receive similar punishments to other criminals.⁷⁷⁰ He attempted to rectify this untenable situation, for example, by introducing sophisticated investigation techniques and advocating for the use of special church boxes that could be used to inform the authorities on suspicious activities.⁷⁷¹ Even though Bodin was in favor of

⁷⁶¹ Ibid, 448.

⁷⁶² Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.6, 192.

⁷⁶³ On a related note, Agamben has compared the Germanic and Scandinavian outlaw bandit figure of the wolf-man to the more famous Roman character of *homo sacer*. These outcasts were forced to carry wolf heads as a symbol of their exile. These ideas were assimilated into stories about the werewolf who was “a monstrous hybrid of human and animal, divided between the forest and the city” and someone who occupied “a threshold of indistinction and of passage between animal and man, *physis* and *nomos*, exclusion and inclusion ... *neither man nor beast*” and someone who existed “paradoxically within both while belonging to neither.” The difference between the northern wolf-man and Bodin’s lycanthrope is that the Angevin was not discussing a mere idea of a hybrid, but an actual, physical amalgamation. However, Agamben’s classification of the symbolic werewolf as something that is neither man nor beast still applies to the idea of an actual lycanthrope at least as much as it does to the metaphorical wolf-man. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 105.

⁷⁶⁴ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.6, 193.

⁷⁶⁵ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 138.

⁷⁶⁶ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.6, 198; see Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. A.T. Murray (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 10.230–245.

⁷⁶⁷ Goodare, *The European Witch Hunt*, 74.

⁷⁶⁸ Pearl, “Humanism and Satanism,” 544.

⁷⁶⁹ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, IV-2, 337.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid, IV.1, 315.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid, IV.1, 318–321.

torturing witches, he was at least somewhat mindful that there should be some limitations to “applying the question [*appliquer à la question*; his euphemism for the horrendous practice].”⁷⁷² Nevertheless, his opposition to witchcraft remained virtually as strict as possible: if this disease could not be cured, those spreading it would need to be wiped out by virtually any means necessary.

7.3 The Biopolitical Element of the Witch Hunt

We know that Bodin was strictly opposed to abortion, birth control, and infanticide. We also know that he viewed this as a matter of great political importance. Furthermore, he seems to uphold this stance in both of his most famous works, in the *République*, where he argues for the largest possible number of people, and in the *Démonomanie*, where he tries to establish a defense against the decimation of the human population. We can conclude that the Angevin’s general natalist, populationist, and anti-abortionist opinions go perfectly hand in hand with his views concerning the harms of sorcery. Both of his urgent programs are aimed toward achieving explicit political benefits by increasing, or at least maintaining both the size and the health of the human population instead of making it smaller or subjecting it to literal and figurative forms of disease. This is an unambiguously biopolitical stance.

Therefore, it stands to reason that Foucault’s take on the issue is neither fair nor accurate. Even a cursory reading of the *Démonomanie* ought to reveal that it would be ill-advised to ridicule the notion that witches were abortionists – it is clear that Bodin considered them as such. However, this is only one part of Foucault’s argument. Meanwhile, he is unquestionably correct in stating the obvious fact that the Angevin did not write his demonology in order to augment the workforce that was going to be needed in futuristic factories some three hundred years later. That being said, Bodin had other political reasons for increasing the number of citizens. It is also important to state that the entire early modern European witch hunt was not a conscious global conspiracy devised in order to put an end to birth control practices and to fill the continent with people after a population crisis. This argument needs to be discarded for the simple reason that the witch hunt was not centrally administered.

Luckily for us, one does not need to rely on neither of these exaggerated claims in order to establish a biopolitical reading of the *Démonomanie*. Instead, the Angevin’s notorious work can be read as a call for action written by a political thinker who had already expressed that a well-ordered commonwealth benefited from having the largest possible number of citizens. Sorcery seemed to lead to the exact opposite of this populationist idea. Those in charge were to pay close attention to the mounting number of abortions and infanticides that were taking place because of both witchcraft and the laxity in the governing of the private affairs of families. Bodin thought that the murderous and abortionist witches

⁷⁷² Ibid, IV.2, 335.

needed to be either cured or liquidated if one wished to prevent veritable political disasters. Furthermore, this was to be considered an utmost important issue of the commonwealth.

Works of demonology attempted to paint witches in the worst possible light. As we have witnessed throughout this chapter, sorcery was synonymous with taboos such as sexual deviancy, infanticide, and cannibalism. There is little doubt that the depiction of these horrors included a meticulously crafted rhetorical aspect. The modern reader might draw a comparison between these stories and modern forms of (social) pornography. However, there does not seem to be any reason to doubt the sincerity of Bodin's belief in sorcery's tangible and corporeal effects. He seems to behold witchcraft as a serious religious crime with concrete consequences that threaten life and politics on multiple levels. Ironically enough, in the end, the Angevin's close acquaintance with the taboo subject contributed to accusations of his own secret involvement, which led to some of his books being burned publicly.⁷⁷³

Based on the findings of this chapter, it seems reasonable to argue that witchcraft can be described as a biopolitical threat. I want to stress once again that this is not to say that the entire early modern European witch hunt, the genre of demonology, or even Bodin's specific contribution, could be explained with *mere* biopolitical motives. As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, no secular rationalization seems to come close to explaining the cluster of reasons that contributed to this tragic series of events. However, our analysis seems to make a strong case for the claim that a distinct biopolitical element should be added to the long list of reasons why witches were hunted. It was certainly a major key to understanding why Bodin felt that it was so necessary to destroy them. This is why I suggest that his demonology includes a clear biopolitical element.

To conclude this chapter, it is worth mentioning that the term "witch hunt" seems to have gained a life of its own. Interestingly enough, the notion has been used to describe some of the best-known instances of state racism from our recent past. If we leave out the central fact that most of these events have absolutely nothing to do with magic, the term continues to be used in a somewhat similar manner as during early modernity. It still describes the act of seeking hidden enemies within one's own community and, in many cases, informing officials about the suspicious behavior of one's neighbors. We know that Bodin praised special boxes that allowed good folks to notify officials about alleged misdeeds of suspicious community members, but we can also witness similar patterns in modernity. The logic of the witch hunt can be argued to prevail with the search for Jews in the Third Reich, Stalin's quest to uncover his political opponents, and even with the rise of mass surveillance after the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001.⁷⁷⁴

The war on terror seems to offer ground for an interesting comparison – the figure of the witch bears a striking resemblance to that of the alleged terrorist. Both appear as targets of state racism. Foucault has claimed that "capital

⁷⁷³ Turchetti, "Jean Bodin."

⁷⁷⁴ Goodare, *The European Witch-Hunt*, 390–392; Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 294; for a detailed description of Stalinist biopolitics, see Sergei Prozorov, *The Biopolitics of Stalinism: Ideology and Life in Soviet Socialism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

punishment could not be maintained except by invoking less the enormity of the crime itself than the monstrosity of the criminal, his incorrigibility, and the safeguard of society. One had the right to kill those who represented a kind of biological danger to others."⁷⁷⁵ This maxim applies extremely well to the killing of the monstrous terrorist who seeks to end the lives of numerous human beings. Agamben has stated that the (alleged) terrorist held in Guantanamo Bay is somewhat similar to the victim of the Nazi death camps because laws do not apply in either of these two places.⁷⁷⁶ The prisoners of both of these two camps can be seen as side products of a state-racist logic that seeks to preserve biological life.

While the threat posed by the terrorist is probably more actual than that of the witch, both are depicted as horrific figures whose mere existence is enough to pose a menace to political security and life itself. Both figures are said to multiply in their secret underground networks, which they use in order to plot chaos and death. Both are commonly clouded by religious categories, yet they are also believed to cause a physical threat to the population. Like the witch, the terrorist can also be tortured and executed in order to achieve peace, security, and the greater good (sometimes with questionable evidence and an insufficient legal process). In today's world of advanced weapons, the bioterrorist represents a hazard to the survival of large portions of humankind, if not its entirety. This state of affairs is reminiscent of Bodin's murderous and abortionist witches who were to be burned as enemies of God, the commonwealth, and the whole of humankind. I would like to argue that the logic of the witch hunt is often analogous to that of state racism - In both cases, the commonwealth and the entire world need to be purged of the infectious witches in order to survive and flourish.

⁷⁷⁵ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1:138.

⁷⁷⁶ Ulrich Raulff, "Interview with Giorgio Agamben: Life, A Work of Art Without an Author: The State of Exception, The Administration of Disorder and Private Life," *German Law Journal* 5, no. 5 (2004).

8 RETHINKING SOVEREIGNTY AND BIOPOLITICS WITH BODIN

As we have witnessed in the chapters above, Bodin suggested a wide range of interventions into the phenomenon that we recognize today as population. These intrusions had to do with the literal juxtaposition of politics and life. Interestingly enough, the distinct aspects of biopolitical governing seemed to co-exist (and even co-operate) with Bodin's much more famous notion of sovereignty. How exactly is this possible? Let us briefly summarize our findings to delve deeper into the theoretical and historical aspects connected to the notion at hand.

Bodin was an enthusiastic supporter of maximizing the population or, in other words, a populationist who saw the largest possible number of citizens as his goal by manipulating the birth rate simultaneously on two fronts: 1) by limiting the use of birth control while 2) suggesting innovative ways of incentivizing reproduction. However, his ambitious population-political ideas did not stop here – he was also fascinated by other ways of examining and regulating the private lives of families. His strong desire to re-establish the ancient magistracy of censors acts as the most notable example of this. The Angevin's rendition of the Roman-style office collected valuable statistics, kept an eye on people's secret activities, boosted reproduction, and got rid of undesirable individuals.

Next, we turned our gaze toward two additional cases of biopolitical governing. Bodin placed considerable emphasis on studying how different climates, bodily fluids, and subsequent natural inclinations were believed to affect people's health and political customs. He argued that prudent rulers ought to consider these corporeal predispositions, but it was also possible to alter them through appropriate forms of discipline. Finally, we focused on the biopolitical interventions included in the Angevin's infamous, politically charged witch-hunting manual, the *Démonomanie*, which incorporated many of the themes he had already discussed in his main work, including reproduction, health, and political security. Bodin believed that witches posed a physical threat to people's lives, the commonwealth, and the entire human race. Because of this, it was necessary to either cure them or to eliminate them.

Based on these findings, it stands to reason that Bodin's political thought includes a general biopolitical undercurrent that consists of wide-ranging population-political interventions into the phenomenon of life. The Angevin is clearly interested in regulating both the quality and the quantity of the people. These assertions seem to coincide with our original hypothesis, according to which we can find a recognizable stratum of biopolitics from within his political thought. Therefore, it may be argued that he ought to be considered as a significant contributor to the long renaissance of biopolitics and one of the forerunners of the eventual emergence of a modern biopolitical era as depicted by Foucault (and Esposito).

Of course, we should remain aware of whom exactly we are dealing with here. After all, Bodin was also the father of the modern theory of sovereignty, a man of law, and a supporter of both *patria potestas* and an absolute monarchy. Claiming that we can find biopolitical elements in political thought such as his begs serious questions regarding the concepts' fundamental definition. At first glance, Bodin may appear to epitomize everything that stands in opposition to biopolitics – at least in the sense in which Foucault defined the notion that he made famous. The most notable problem seems to arise from the incompatible nature of biopolitics (the power that makes live and lets die) and sovereign power (the power that kills and lets live).

One of the two additional questions that we posed as our guidelines at the beginning of this work relates to this exact problem. We asked, what is the connection between the two technologies of power when it comes to Bodin's political philosophy and, furthermore, what can be said about their complex relationship in a more general sense? Are they operating simultaneously, and, if so, in what sense, and to what extent? Is their connection limited to state racism, or do they share some additional links? In this chapter, I argue for the distinct conceptual nature of the two technologies (contra Agamben), while maintaining that they can still exist simultaneously if their core functions (killing and making live) are to remain separate. State racism seems to provide the sole exception to this rule: it allows sovereign power to display its full form within the framework of biopolitics.

Suppose we choose to read Bodin as a biopolitical thinker or, perhaps more accurately, as a thinker whose political thought contains several biopolitical elements before the alleged proper biopolitical era of modernity. In that case, we are also faced with yet another fundamentally important and hotly debated question concerning biopolitics and its history: did biopolitics exist before the concluding centuries of the second millennium? As we have witnessed earlier, this question divides the prevailing literature into two opposing camps. The likes of Foucault and Esposito suppose that we are dealing with an exclusively modern occurrence. In contrast, others, such as Agamben and Ojakangas, argue that the phenomenon is in fact far older (although only Ojakangas seems to be using the notion of biopolitics in the Foucauldian sense as something that is focused on the maximization of life and not its exclusion by the sovereign). This chapter

demonstrates why our reading of Bodin's political thought supports the theory of a pre-modern reading of biopolitics.

The task at hand may seem somewhat complicated. We are indeed forced to tackle two major challenges regarding the fundamental nature of biopolitics before constructing a fully fleshed-out reading of Bodin as a biopolitical thinker. However, I believe that the ensuing re-interpretation of his political thought could help us increase our understanding of the concept of biopolitics and the phenomenon's debated history. My aim is to take what we have learned from our close reading of Bodin's political texts and use our newly gained insights to participate in these two previously established, yet still largely unresolved debates. I hope to reach a synthesis that includes the strongest contributions provided by each of the major theorists.

Finally, we take a different approach to learning from the history of biopolitics. We speculate whether or not biopolitics can still be regarded as a topical issue today; is there value in studying the dusty tomes of yesteryear; and, if so, what exactly could this value be? Most importantly, we focus on determining if there is something that our reading of Bodin's political texts can teach us about current (and forthcoming) biopolitical ideas and practices. I argue that employing the method of genealogy in order to study the historical forms of biopolitics continues to provide us with useful information regarding some of the current manifestations of this life-affirming power. If this is indeed the case, it stands to reason that understanding the diverse biopolitical elements that appear in Bodin's works may help us sharpen our perception regarding the politics of life in a more general sense. Biopolitics seems to have retained its fundamental logic (care of life) despite the ceaseless and aleatoric changes that have transformed some of its manifestations beyond recognition. We also take time to discuss what is in store for the future of biopolitics. We ask, will the current approaches to the politics of life continue to prevail or will they perhaps be replaced by some entirely different non-biopolitical approach or another?

In this chapter, we concentrate, firstly, on the two technologies of power and their alleged dynamic, both in Bodin's political theory and in a universal sense. We commence this task by comparing the current reading of Bodin's political texts with the prevailing theories on biopolitics, governmentality, and sovereign power. Secondly, we debate the question concerning the history of biopolitics in order to seek Bodin's place within this larger narrative. We approach this challenge with the help of a concept that I would like to call *biopolitics before the biopolitical era*, which might eliminate some of the confusion surrounding this utmost convoluted topic. Finally, we speculate whether we can still consider biopolitics as a topical issue. If so, what can our newly enhanced understanding of the past teach us about today's biopolitical governing and, furthermore, can we perhaps make some predictions concerning its future?

8.1 Sovereign Power, Biopolitics, and Governmentality

Bodin's most significant contribution to political theory is still his famed theory of indivisible, perpetual, and absolute sovereignty marked by the power to make laws and command each and every one of its subjects. However, we have witnessed that his oeuvre also seems to include another approach to the question of power. We have identified this alternative logic as a stratum of biopolitical governing. This assertion begs the question, how can the two technologies of power co-exist within the Angevin's political thought, especially if we were to follow Foucault who conceptualized them as virtually incompatible? As we have discussed previously, Foucault used the notion of sovereign power to describe how absolute monarchs ruled over the land before modernity; this old technology of power was exercised through laws and showed practically no interest in the maximization and optimization of life whatsoever. Meanwhile, the new technology of biopower started to govern life closely to make it flourish through norms instead of laws that seemed to always presuppose the presence of harsh punishment.

The most obvious manner of unraveling this enigma would be to follow Foucault into applying the theory of state racism. Here, the core functions of sovereign power (to kill and let live) and biopower (to make live and let die) become at least momentarily intertwined – the old juridico-discursive power is tasked with killing those deemed unworthy or harmful from the perspective of the new technology.⁷⁷⁷ As a result, literal or figurative death is inflicted upon some parts of the population in order to achieve biopolitical gains for a larger or otherwise dominant part of that same population. As we have noted, some of Bodin's ideas do indeed follow such a formula; for example, he is keen on driving out undesirable vermin who seek to corrupt decent people,⁷⁷⁸ and he wishes to hunt down murderous and abortionist witches who appear to infect those around them like lepers.⁷⁷⁹

However, most of Bodin's biopolitically charged ideas appear to land outside this rather peripheral category. For example, his populationist logic can be crystallized around the goal of increasing the number of births while decreasing birth control and infanticide. Thus, the most central part of his biopolitical program does not seem to share any kind of connection with the politics of death (thanatopolitics). If anything, Bodin's stark, at least partially population-politically motivated opposition to killing children sets his approach apart from some of the Greek philosophers' population policies of infanticide and child exposure. Therefore, it would seem reasonable to argue that while the concept of state racism remains an extremely beneficial tool for understanding the thanatopolitical aspects of biopolitics, it does not explain the entirety of Bodin's biopolitical system.

⁷⁷⁷ Foucault, *"Il faut défendre la société"*, 227–234.

⁷⁷⁸ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 846.

⁷⁷⁹ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, IV.5, 365.

The next logical turn would be to consult Agamben, who has taken the radical step of contesting the division between the two technologies altogether. Does the fact that we can find biopolitical elements from the *République*, a classic text of absolute sovereignty, mean that we must side with Agamben in proclaiming that the two technologies are, in fact, fundamentally intertwined? Furthermore, do we need to agree that the sovereign decision did indeed give birth to the biopolitical subject and that the division between the two technologies is thus fundamentally superfluous?⁷⁸⁰ The answer to all these questions seems to be no. As we have established earlier, Agamben's understanding of biopolitics bears a certain resemblance to the Foucauldian notion of state racism. Consequently, the two theories seem to share many of the same limitations as well.

While both state racism and the *bios-zoē*-bare life triangle can be used to capture a certain portion of Bodin's political thought, they fail to depict the full diversity of his biopolitical approaches. This is because the core forms of biopolitics (both in Bodin's case and in general) are connected to taking care of life instead of exiling it from a meaningful existence, an exercise of sovereign power. Therefore, I see absolutely no reason for presuming that biopolitics, understood as an inherently affirmative force, would require the exclusion of bare life in order to function (although it does occasionally take such a step).

8.1.1 The Two Levels?

Trying to seize Bodin's biopolitics exclusively through state racism or the sovereign ban seems to be out of the question, even though these theories remain useful for grasping some of the biopolitical elements witnessed both in his political works and everywhere around us. We are, nevertheless, left without a complete overview of the topic. The most promising way to approach the issue seems to be to think of the two technologies as concurrent arrangements that operate on separate levels, or, in other words, reinforce each other without interrupting each other. This would allow us to maintain Foucault's original ideas concerning state racism as a function that combines the core tasks of both mechanisms while acknowledging Ojakangas' claim that that such a connection of the two technologies radical objectives is always plagued by the absurdity of the "unreconcilable tension"⁷⁸¹ that results from eliminating some lifeforms in order to affirm others.

We can approach the issue further by examining a similar division between the concepts of sovereign power and the closely biopolitics-related notion of governmentality, understood here as the conduct of conduct or, in other words, making someone act in a manner that they would not have selected without interference. As we have discussed previously, forms of historical governmentality have been regarded as a precondition to the ensuing biopolitical era, which can be understood as the current and most prominent form of

⁷⁸⁰ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 6, 120.

⁷⁸¹ Ojakangas, "Impossible Dialogue on Bio-power," 26-27.

governmentality. The two themes are, therefore, linked closely. Agamben has provided us with a great place to start by discussing a rupture that separates sovereignty per se from the exercise of power, or, in other words, power and its use.⁷⁸² He approaches this issue by analyzing the theological model of absolute power (*potentia absoluta*) and ordered power (*potentia ordinata*). According to him, the medieval doctrine that separated these two “made it possible to reconcile God’s omnipotence of the world with the idea of an ordered, nonarbitrary, and nonchaotic government of the world.”⁷⁸³ Later, a similar logic would be used to divide mundane absoluteness and governing, or, in other words, formal sovereign power and the specific exercises of power.

Agamben argues that Foucault’s influential separation between sovereignty and governmental power has to do with this same exact division.⁷⁸⁴ He then proceeds to quote the *Sécurité, territoire, population* (*Security, Territory, Population*) lectures,⁷⁸⁵ during which Foucault claims that the scientific breakthroughs of the sixteenth century proved that God does not exercise a shepherd-like governing of the world and that he only rules over it through general principles.⁷⁸⁶ While Foucault’s idea does bear some resemblance to Agamben’s argument, the Italian philosopher criticizes his predecessor for overlooking the much older separation of kingdom and government, which he believes to be connected to the intertwined economic-theological concepts of providence and *oikonomia*.⁷⁸⁷ Nevertheless, Agamben offers a slight compromise by stating that the early modern scientific theories mentioned by Foucault helped radicalize this pre-existing split.⁷⁸⁸ Determining the exact beginning of the division is beyond the scope of this current work, but it is, nevertheless, important to note that both theorists constructed somewhat similar theological models that help explain the separation between the distinct modes of power.

8.1.2 The Division of Sovereignty and Governing in Bodin’s Political Thought

We can witness a comparable division in Bodin’s political thought when he separates the form of the state (*l’etat*) from its government (*le gouvernement*).⁷⁸⁹ The Angevin maintains that while sovereignty is to be considered absolute, its indivisible form does not predetermine how the commonwealth ought to be governed or its offices distributed. As we established earlier, Roman-style censors serve as a great example of this; they govern that which is common in the commonwealth (“*ce qui est commun à la République*”)⁷⁹⁰ without relying on law or sovereign power. Therefore, the censors are never slowed down by endless legal

⁷⁸² Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 104–108.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁷⁸⁵ Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, 235.

⁷⁸⁶ Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 111.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, II.2, 272.

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 835.

processes and instead opt for a more subtle approach. They can govern the people with the power of their mere presence and a watchful gaze. These reserved forms of intervention are more than enough to force the subjects into also governing themselves. Furthermore, this distinct level of governing seems to be the source for many of Bodin's biopolitical ideas. This is not to say that sovereignty and biopolitics would need to be hermeneutically sealed off from each other – they are clearly mutually beneficial in making the commonwealth function. However, what remains mutually exclusive is the deathly, radical core of sovereignty and the life-enhancing objective of biopolitics. Once again, state racism establishes an exception to the rule, since it represents an amalgamation of both the deathly sovereign power and biopolitical governing.

Other thinkers have also succeeded in highlighting this division between governing and sovereign power in Bodin's thought.⁷⁹¹ Senellart brings up the Angevin in his book *Les arts de gouverner: Du regimen médiéval au concept de gouvernement*, where he approaches the split by analyzing the medieval notion of *regimen* (Latin for "control" or "steering," separated from *regnum*, Latin for "kingdom" or "realm"), which he sees as the basis for modern governing. Agamben disagrees by claiming that *regimen* is a dead letter in the history of governmentality.⁷⁹² He also criticizes Senellart for echoing Foucault's alleged mistakes by neglecting the original division between the universal and specific forms of governing witnessed in the treatises on providence or divine government.⁷⁹³ Debating the genealogy of the separation before Bodin's days would make for an interesting research topic, but since our focus is with the Angevin, it suffices to say that both authors connect the notion of governmentality with Bodin's political thought while maintaining that he was by no means the first to come up with it.

The two approaches, sovereignty and governmentality, and their role within Bodin's political thought, are also discussed at length in Berns's book *Souveraineté, droit et gouvernementalité*.⁷⁹⁴ According to Berns, the technologies are not conflicting; instead, they seem to reinforce one another. Even though the two have distinct tasks and methods, they seem to share some effects or objectives. To paraphrase Bodin, the strict form of law could not seize and punish all offenders, whereas the nimble magistracy of censors succeeds in plugging the remaining holes, which are too often exploited by the worst kinds of wrongdoers.⁷⁹⁵ In other words, censors, and governing in general, seem to deal with the peripheries of power that are left untouched by the more rigid technology. The fact that one approach is marked by the power to make laws while the other is released from the burden of legal processes altogether seems to be one of the keys to their uninterrupted and mutually beneficial co-existence within the same commonwealth.

⁷⁹¹ Senellart, *Les arts de gouverner*, 32–34.

⁷⁹² Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 113.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁴ See, for example, Berns, *Souveraineté, droit et gouvernementalité*, 133–138.

⁷⁹⁵ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 846.

Foucault makes a remarkably similar point during his 1975–1976 lectures “*Il faut défendre la société*” (“*Society Must Be Defended*”). Here, he mentions that the new technology was needed precisely because “far too many things were escaping the old mechanism of the power of the sovereignty, both at the level of detail and at the mass level.”⁷⁹⁶ He also presents a related argument in the first part of the *Histoire de la sexualité* (*The History of Sexuality*), where he claims that the old technology of power was based on laws, while biopower has to do with norms, which does not bar it from using laws as well.⁷⁹⁷ In fact, he notices that modern laws are often somewhat reminiscent of norms. While today’s representatives of the popular sovereign in a welfare society are still *de facto* in charge of legislation, the final product seems to often have more in common with biopolitical governing than it does with the traditional forms of sovereign power and the ensuing presence of harsh punishments.⁷⁹⁸ In other words, the main function associated with sovereignty seems to become appropriated by a completely different manifestation of power. Finally, Foucault argues that the distinct technologies were not simply replaced in a series of revolutions; instead, they appear to form a triangle:

So we should not see things as the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a society of discipline, and then of a society of discipline by a society, say, of government. In fact we have a triangle: sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management, which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanisms.⁷⁹⁹

While the two technologies seem to be able to reinforce each other, the prevailing literature and our close reading of Bodin’s political texts suggest that biopolitics and sovereign power should not be regarded as one and the same, nor are they fundamentally entwined in the Agambenian manner that implies the founding exclusion of bare life. Indeed, there seems to be no convincing reason to maintain that the biopolitical order must be established through the sovereign exception and ban, despite Agamben’s best arguments. Furthermore, as Ojakangas has maintained, the banished figure of *homo sacer* should not be considered as the paradigmatic example of the biopolitical subject who is, instead, embodied best by the middle-class inhabitant of a welfare state, the person whose life is most sheltered and affirmed.⁸⁰⁰ In fact, *homo sacer* is not a subject of biopolitics in the first place; instead, this marginal figure should be understood as a result of collateral damage, a mere side effect ensuing from a state-racist form of biopolitics attempting to affirm its actual subjects, those who belong to the more cherished part of the same population. If the *homo sacer*’s exclusion has no affirmative biopolitical benefits to anyone, the ensuing state of exclusion seems to have even less to do with biopolitics.

⁷⁹⁶ Foucault, “*Society Must Be Defended*”, 243.

⁷⁹⁷ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 177.

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 189–190.

⁷⁹⁹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 107–108.

⁸⁰⁰ Ojakangas, “Impossible Dialogue on Bio-power,” 26–27.

Both technologies seem to offer distinct ways of dealing with the question of life; one regulates it with many interventions while the other is only interested in levying blood, sweat, and taxes. Depending on the perspective, a large population can thus be seen either as a disposable source of military might and tax revenue or as a valuable resource (the greatest wealth) controlled through a series of political interventions. Both of these perspectives fit within a single polity, and they may be useful to one another. To summarize our argument thus far, life-affirming biopolitics and the deathly core of sovereign power ought to remain conceptual opposites that cannot join together in their fullest Foucauldian sense unless life is both affirmed and negated simultaneously. However, this does not prevent them from co-existing in a mutually beneficial manner if there is a dilution (sovereign power does not resort to its deathly potential), or their radical cores (killing and making live) are to function on distinct levels without interruptions.

As we have mentioned, we can witness a parallel split between sovereign power and governmentality, a concept that has such close ties to the notion of biopolitics that the two are sometimes used virtually as synonyms.⁸⁰¹ The second distinction can be said to focus more on the difference between laws and norms than on questions concerning life and death. Governmentality seems to also allow for a less limited relationship with sovereignty than biopolitics does. This division, which seems to be highlighted by Bodin himself, separates the somewhat distant rule of law from governing, which functions by setting norms and regulating the subjects closely. However, some laws tend to bear a resemblance with norms, which renders their connection to sovereign power only nominal. Roman-style marriage laws, for example, serve the distinctly biopolitical objective of boosting the birthrate. They touch the life of each individual while also affecting the entire population. Although the muddy concepts of sovereign power, biopolitics, and governmentality could be analyzed even further with the help of a wider selection of literature, nothing seems to alter the fact that sovereign power and biopolitics ought to remain conceptually separate (although not mutually exclusive) due to their respective definitions, unlike what Agamben has argued.

It is worth mentioning that Mitchell Dean criticizes Foucault for approaching power through the dichotomy of sovereignty and governmentality instead of understanding that the underlying phenomenon is a “di-polar” relation that can encompass multiple aspects simultaneously.⁸⁰² He calls this idea the *signature of power*, which refers “not simply to how power comes into being, or how it is assembled, but to how it is used and blocked, furthered and resisted.”⁸⁰³ Dean’s argument is in a sense similar to Esposito’s,⁸⁰⁴ according to whom the sovereign entity makes the protection of life possible in the first place,

⁸⁰¹ For example, in the previously quoted *Security, Territory, Population* lecture of February 1, 1978, the concept of “governmental management” seems to occupy the place of biopolitics as one of the three technologies of power. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 107–108.

⁸⁰² Mitchell Dean, “The Signature of Power,” *Journal of Political Power*, 5, no. 1 (2012): 101–117.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁸⁰⁴ Esposito, *Bíos*, 57.

and the two technologies are, therefore, not mutually exclusive but, instead, act as two sides of the same coin. Following these two thinkers allows us to realize that power is rarely (if ever) derived from a single paradigm or technology, be it sovereign, disciplinary, or governmental.

I wish to clarify that I do not seek to perpetuate this needless dichotomy by discussing the “different levels.” Dean is most certainly right – sovereign power and biopolitics are clearly working together in a very tangible manner. Examples are countless: sovereignty is established in order to provide security (and through it, happiness), the sovereign also collects funds that are used to operate the system that provides welfare while lawbreakers are, once again, apprehended simultaneously by both laws and norms. Therefore, it is clear that the technologies co-exist without interruption and operate in a mutually helpful manner. However, even though they form a di-polar accord, we can still separate them conceptually (one establishes a legal order while the other offers providence within the said order; one levies money while the other spends it to provide wellbeing for the citizens; one makes laws and captures those who break them while the other disciplines the individuals operating on the fringes of said laws). Biopolitics does not replace sovereign power entirely and, as we have witnessed, biopolitical programs can rely on the sovereign foundation (although we can also imagine biopolitical power relations without the existence of a sovereign entity). The logical impasse only kicks in when we are discussing the radical core of sovereignty within Foucault’s admittedly atypical and somewhat hastily formulated theory – taking a life and making someone live can only take place simultaneously under one condition. It is important to note that we are still dealing with a di-polar relation of power even regarding state racism.

To me, the problem appears a semantic one: as we have established, Foucault uses the notion of sovereignty in two ways, one that is juxtaposed with governmentality; here, he is essentially comparing law with governing; these two are relatively easy to merge as we see with the case of Bodin. However, the other sense, which juxtaposes biopolitics with sovereignty as the power that is crystallized around its capacity to take lives does not appear to be as simple. The question is, should the latter, narrow notion even be designated “sovereign power” without some kind of additional clarification? Perhaps we ought to be discussing the lingering form of *patria potestas* or the “radical core of sovereign power,” neither of which seem to equate to all forms of sovereign power as per the wider and more traditional definitions (for example, the rarely lethal popular sovereignty of a welfare state). Sovereignty equates to much more than just the power to kill, although it could perhaps be debated that it can always be boiled down to this fundamental capacity. Whatever the case may be, biopolitics and killing are always removed from one another outside instances of state racism (hence they can only co-exist on “different levels” without resulting in biopolitically motivated killings). Although the technologies can still clearly work together in another, perhaps more universal, sense, the narrower (and rarer) meaning of sovereign power is mutually exclusive with biopolitics outside this one exception.

8.2 Revisiting the History of Biopolitics

The second significant question that arises from our findings has to do with the history of biopolitics. If we were to follow Foucault's famous, yet surprisingly concise efforts on this topic during the late 1970s, biopolitics ought to be understood as a purely modern phenomenon.⁸⁰⁵ As we mentioned earlier, Agamben and others have contested this initial periodization.⁸⁰⁶ Ojakangas has posed the most substantial challenge yet by gathering an abundance of evidence in order to support his argument that biopolitical ideas and practices are not exclusive to modernity and were, instead, already commonplace in the ancient world.⁸⁰⁷

This sub-chapter focuses on sketching out the birth of biopolitics and especially its rebirth during the Renaissance. Our goal is to establish Bodin's place within this larger narrative. We also approach the topic from the opposite perspective by asking what a biopolitical reading of the Angevin's political thought can reveal to us about the broader history of biopolitics. Where did his biopolitical ideas originate from, and were his sources perhaps equally biopolitical, to begin with? All this is done to figure out where our current project stands in comparison to the prevailing literature, and whether there is perhaps something that we could do in order to develop these pre-existing theories even further?

8.2.1 The Renaissance of Biopolitics

As we established in the second chapter, Ojakangas has argued that the ancient biopolitical discourse quietened down during late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. However, the Latin translations of central Greek political texts seem to have prompted a gradual return of many biopolitical ideas and practices during later Medieval times and early modernity.⁸⁰⁸ Bodin appears to be a vital part of this long *renaissance of biopolitics*. As we have observed repeatedly, the Angevin was a master of adopting and adapting ancient viewpoints. In fact, all his significant biopolitical ideas include at least some kind of reference to the pre-existing classical notions.

The ancient influence can be witnessed most clearly in Bodin's takes on censors and climates, but, as we have noted in the respective chapters, his arguments regarding witchcraft and the number of citizens were also written with a certain reference to classic works. There are, of course, times when Bodin cites his sources only to debate them. Such is the case with his populationist argument, which includes a severe critique of the Greek philosophers' restrictive population-political stance and the harsh methods they would use in order to

⁸⁰⁵ See for example Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 177–211.

⁸⁰⁶ See Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 6, 120.

⁸⁰⁷ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 1–3. See also Ojakangas, "Michel Foucault and the Enigmatic Origins of Bio-Politics and Governmentality," 1–14.

⁸⁰⁸ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 129–133.

enforce quotas on the number of citizens. Instead of taking the restrictive approach, Bodin chooses to take his cues from another ancient source, the Romans, who attempted to incentivize reproduction. While these two logics seem geometrically opposed (one includes a restrictive and even thanatopolitical approach while the other optimizes life in a mostly affirmative manner), both are still recognizably biopolitical because they seek to influence issues such as the birth rate (and child mortality) in order to achieve explicit political objectives.

It is also worth remarking that the biopolitical elements in Bodin's political thought have no significant connection to the Judeo-Christian concept of pastoral power, which Foucault understood as the initial foundation of the modern biopolitical logic that was allegedly unknown to the Greeks.⁸⁰⁹ Instead, Bodin constantly refers to classical philosophy, which Ojakangas perceives as the actual basis of modern biopolitics. Therefore, our closer reading of the Angevin's political thought offers extensive support for Ojakangas' claims concerning the ancient birth of biopolitics and its return during the Renaissance. It would make sense to argue that the roots of this life-affirming phenomenon are not with the Judeo-Christian tradition that acted to suppress biopolitical interventions but, instead, with the classical political thought that regulated virtually every aspect of life.⁸¹⁰

I argue that Agamben and Ojakangas are thus correct to challenge Foucault's hasty periodization, which could be argued to constitute the only major flaw in his otherwise brilliant theory of biopolitics. The fact that we can find well-defined biopolitical elements in Bodin's political thought seems to lend support to the claim that the phenomenon predates modernity (understood here in the Foucauldian sense). While further estimations concerning the birth of biopolitics are outside the scope of this current work, I concur with Ojakangas by stating that we seem to be dealing with an ancient occurrence for the simple reason that so many of Bodin's biopolitical ideas were direct responses to previous, equally biopolitical Greco-Roman notions. Hence, it seems clear that political interventions into life are at least as old as the earliest forms of recorded political philosophy, just as Ojakangas argues. Agamben could also be right when he claims that the birth of biopolitics coincides with the very dawn of Western politics. However, his conception of biopolitics does not correspond with our Foucauldian definition. Whatever the case may be, it would appear that the pre-modern era was already absolutely riddled with undeniable examples of biopolitical governing.

Finally, we ought to mention that examples of pre-modern biopolitics are equally present in both political theory and political practices. As we have witnessed repeatedly in the course of this work, we can find unambiguously biopolitical elements in Plato's and Aristotle's philosophical texts and the way that life was established in Rome (especially through city planning and special magistrates such as the censors). Bodin appropriates some of these ideas directly from his sources, but he also refines and reverses others in order to make them

⁸⁰⁹ Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, 132–133.

⁸¹⁰ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 18.

fit into his agenda. There seems to be no way around the fact that the biopolitical governing of life was a fundamental part of politics long before Foucault dared to assume.

8.2.2 Biopolitics Before the Biopolitical Era

One must remain aware of the fact that the concept of life has transformed drastically throughout the years. This has taken place most notably due to the emergence of modern biology and the allied “human sciences.”⁸¹¹ Biopolitical interventions have also become more sophisticated, while some previous approaches have been altered, reversed, or even utterly abandoned. Such objections against our pre-modern periodization are warranted; however, as we established earlier, issues pertaining to living (sex, reproduction, health, survival, mundane and material wellbeing, etc.) seem to have puzzled rulers’ and political theorists’ minds long before the emergence of the current biopolitical era. How could one even begin to describe Plato’s flagrant state racism without evoking the notion of biopolitics at least implicitly?⁸¹² Is there anything more obviously biopolitical than the attempt to improve human stock through animal-style breeding? It suffices to say that all key phenomena that we associate with the concept of population today seem to have been under meticulous control some time prior to the modern emergence of the concept itself.

The theory of pre-modern biopolitics is bound to face criticism despite the clarifications we have made thus far. However, I would like to argue that most of the notable difficulties one encounters while discussing these convoluted issues are caused simply by the vague use of concepts. Of course, being precise is no easy feat when it comes to a topic such as biopolitics – while Foucault’s interpretation of the notion that he popularized was already brief and ambiguous to begin with (he only explored the topic in a few lectures and one short book focused primarily on sexuality), the concept has become even more blurry due to an influx of conflicting re-interpretations.

One of the central difficulties that inquiries such as ours face is that preserving material life did not seem to become the explicit end of political theory before Hobbes,⁸¹³ as Esposito⁸¹⁴ has reasoned. The Greek philosophers constructed their ideal societies as a means of achieving *eudaimonia*, and while they were masters of biopolitical governing, their understanding of flourishing consisted “in activity in accordance with ... the highest virtue ... contemplation”⁸¹⁵ – not life in the strictly material sense. Meanwhile, the men of

⁸¹¹ Foucault’s 1966 breakthrough work *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (*The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*) details the modern emergence of the concept of life. Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 137–139.

⁸¹² It is important to note that state racism does not necessitate the modern theory of hereditary ethnicity or “race” and it can thus be used in order to eliminate other similarly motivated threats to life.

⁸¹³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 87.

⁸¹⁴ Esposito, *Bíos*, 46.

⁸¹⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1177a.

the Church believed that mundane life was inferior to whatever was to follow in the life after death.⁸¹⁶

Even if Esposito and Backman were right, such claims have very little to do with our central argument. Many of those who saw mere life as inferior to some ultimate motive were, nevertheless, also interested in controlling the lives of the people – food and drink had to be provided for the needy, the quality of the people was to be regulated, and the number of citizens needed to be managed before it would be possible to partake in contemplation, a path only open for the few (for the rest, life was most likely situated in the matrix of biopolitics). Therefore, it would appear that population-political ideas and practices can remain important even if material wellbeing is not seen as the goal of virtually all politics. In the end, biopolitics has to do with the concrete mechanisms of power and not theoretical appraisals of what constitutes happiness.

As we have witnessed, the early biopolitical thinkers went as far as to suggest eugenics as a way of improving the human stock and infanticide in order to meet certain population-political quotas. All this took place long before the Foucauldian understanding of modernity and the commencement of the proper biopolitical era signaled by biological life becoming the principal target of virtually all politics, as Foucault (and many of the other theorists of biopolitics) argue. Hence, there seems to be an evident disconnection between undeniable examples of biopolitical governing and a specific biopolitical period (modernity). I attempt to mend this disruption by asserting that biopolitical ideas and practices could take place outside the current episteme that has finally chosen to regard biological life as the object of practically all political aspirations.

To clarify, I do not wish to argue against modernity as an unprecedented age of biopolitics or to deny its status as the first era to place material life as the true and explicit purpose of politics instead of contemplation or the afterlife. This part of Esposito's argument seems reasonable enough. Indeed, we can agree that we are perhaps living in the sole truly biopolitical era in recorded history. If the Hobbesian primacy of survival was to be considered the only definition of biopolitics, we would have no choice but to follow Esposito's periodization even further; there would be no choice but to concur that recorded forms of biopolitics did not exist before modernity because the interventions into mere life that did take place before the biopolitical era were made within a political framework that did not yet believe in the absolute supremacy of life in the material sense.

However, it would be unwise to dismiss the political theories and practices that have clearly been focusing on life itself since the beginning of recorded political thought. I would like to argue that the birth of biopolitics can be thus said to commence when material life was first juxtaposed with political governing, even though the likes of Esposito would argue that such an event would not yet constitute a fully biopolitical era per se. In other words, *biopolitical elements* predate the *biopolitical era* of modernity as Foucault understands it. Furthermore, I would like to argue that all affirming political interventions into life ought to be considered biopolitical, whether they are made within an

⁸¹⁶ See Backman, "*Bene vivere politice.*"

episteme that believes in the primacy of mere life, afterlife, the life of the mind, the stability of the state, financial gain, or some other higher cause. After all, can we truly be certain that the protection of biological life is still more revered than, say, commercial profit?⁸¹⁷ Even if the absolute primacy of mere life was once again placed on the back seat, it could, nevertheless, remain an important political value and a significant site of governing. This is why it is easy to argue that the end of biopolitics does not appear to be imminent.

Because of these reasons, I have decided to follow Agamben and Ojakangas in disputing Foucault's and Esposito's assessments regarding the birth of biopolitics. I would like to propose a small addition to these brilliant arguments in the form of the concept of *biopolitics before the modern biopolitical era*. My goal is that the pre-modern examples of life-affirming governing (some of which have been conceptualized previously through the notion of governmentality) could also be captured through the notion of biopolitics while still maintaining the possibility of making a conceptual separation between such elements and the explicitly biopolitical era, which seems to be restricted to the specific timeframe established by Foucault and, in a sense, reinforced by Esposito. This small redefinition might help us combat some of the misunderstandings we tend to face when approaching these complicated issues.

I also believe that this notion can help us conceptualize the biopolitical elements witnessed in classical political thought, the renaissance of biopolitics, and Bodin's political works. Such an approach might also expand our understanding concerning the concept of biopolitics in a more general sense. Furthermore, it could even teach us something about the larger history of political thought. Meanwhile, restricting ourselves to Foucault's somewhat rushed periodization sets unnecessary limitations to advancements on all of these fronts. Understanding biopolitics as an ancient phenomenon and, furthermore, as a set of practices and theories separated from a specific historical era allows us to keep on unlocking the fullest potential of this immensely powerful theory.

There are still many steps to take. The prevailing research has but scratched the surface when it comes to uncovering the long renaissance of biopolitics. Future studies could provide a deeper look into the possible biopolitical significance of thinkers such as Bacon, Botero, Campanella, Hobbes, Machiavelli, and More, just to name a few. General early modern political theory remains largely untapped from this perspective, but the history of utopian thought, which seems to continue closely in the footsteps of Plato's utmost biopolitical *Republic*, could prove to be an especially interesting subject for further research.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁷ I discuss the complex relationship between (neo)liberal economics and biopolitical governing in the next sub-chapter of this work.

⁸¹⁸ Ville Suuronen has brought attention to the biopolitical significance of several classic utopias mentioned by Schmitt. See Ville Suuronen, "The Rise of the *Homme Machine*: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Biotechnology and Utopias," *Political Theory* 48, no. 5 (2020): 615–643.

8.3 The Present and Future of Biopolitics

This final part of this chapter has to do with the biopolitical landscapes of today and tomorrow. Now we will have the opportunity to speculate whether our re-interpretations concerning the definition and history of our key concept can teach us something about modern population-political ideas and practices. To put it bluntly, we ask what kind of relevance can a study such as ours have and should (the history of) biopolitics still be studied in the first place? The modern relevance of biopolitics is yet to face a veritable challenge. Even though the celebrated theorists of biopolitics have taken exceedingly varied approaches in their respective analyses, they all seem to accept that their shared topic of research has become practically omnipresent in the modern world. Indeed, everybody from Arendt⁸¹⁹ to Agamben⁸²⁰ agrees that an overwhelming part of modern governing has to do with biological life.

Furthermore, as we have argued, the fundamental life-affirming rationality of biopolitics remains more or less unchanged, even though the specific governmental instruments and objectives have continued to vary throughout the years. Hence, it would appear reasonable to argue that studies such as ours can indeed offer at least some insight into our surrounding reality. If nothing else, we may be able to discover the roots of some of our current biopolitical practices, which could, in return, reveal to us something about their present-day logic. However, the idea of reading the past of biopolitics as the history of something that is still happening today and something that will perhaps continue to transpire in the conceivable future seems only to work if the phenomenon of biopolitics itself remains relevant.

Thus far, we have occupied ourselves with the history of the phenomenon and especially its early modern incarnations. Based on the cited literature and our own initial results, we have claimed that biopolitics is not an exclusively modern phenomenon and that it should instead be understood as a common thread to all of modernity, including early modernity (regardless of the unprecedented level of biopolitics that was only achieved during so-called proper or full modernity). The question that remains to be answered is whether or not biopolitics continues to pierce the current era of “postmodernity,” or perhaps more suitably “late modernity.” At first glance, it would certainly appear that material welfare remains a significant political value and a site of governmental interventions, but will this also be the case in the future? Furthermore, we need to ask whether the notion of biopolitics has already become too all-inclusive in order to convey anything meaningful.

⁸¹⁹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 320–325.

⁸²⁰ See most importantly Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 6, 120.

8.3.1 Biopolitics and Its Alternatives

The question that needs to be answered first is whether biopolitics has retained its relevance in the twenty-first century. Have new alternatives to the question of life already appeared, and if not, could we see them emerge in the near future? Ironically enough, the best way to evaluate the prevalence of the phenomenon at hand seems to be to ask what kind of arrangements of power are definitely not biopolitical. Biopolitics has been morphing into a buzzword with diminishing gravitas ever since it became the topic of contemporary mainstream discussion. This takes us to an even more pressing difficulty. At times, it would appear that practically everything can be labeled as biopolitical. If this is indeed the case, how can any study, including ours, add any value to such an omnipresent concept? Has the notion become too exhaustive? Luckily, it would appear that this is not the case. Instead, biopolitics has at least two clearly non-biopolitical counterparts: firstly, one that we have already discussed at length; manifestations of power that do not affect life through any kind of positive interventions; and, secondly, attempts toward understanding the politics of life through a lens that differs entirely from that of traditional biopolitical governing. Let us focus briefly on these two alternatives.

Firstly, there are techniques of power that disregard life until they choose to negate it: sovereign power or juridico-discursive power. This does not come as a surprise, since we have already argued extensively for the need to distinguish juridico-discursive sovereign power from the distinct category of biopolitics. Thus, I will be brief. All exercises of power that are not directed at life in any other way, shape, or form besides levying from it or eliminating it should not be considered biopolitical. The radical cores of two technologies are irreconcilably different according to their very definitions. Power displayed through the act of killing is somewhat easy to spot, but the gray area that has no positive connection to the question of life is probably more common and, therefore, harder to identify. This kind of power is not mutually exclusive to biopolitics.

The line that separates biopolitics from perspectives that ignore life does not seem to follow any easy pattern: regulations on automobile insurance, for example, might not have anything to do with biopolitics, whereas speed limits have a direct connection to mortality rates and the public health. The latter piece of legislation can thus be said to include a biopolitical element even though it operates through the instrument associated with sovereignty.⁸²¹ Our best bet for figuring out whether or not a specific issue ought to be considered biopolitical is to simply examine whether it maximizes and optimizes life, views it as a non-issue, negates it altogether, or both negates and affirms it simultaneously.

As we have maintained previously, state racism remains the sole example of biopolitics working together with the old technology of power in both of their fullest forms. This deadly combination has to do with optimizing chosen forms of life while limiting or destroying others in order to reach biopolitical goals.

⁸²¹ See Dean, *Governmentality*, ch. 6.

Even though state racism is connected to biopolitics, most forms of killing are not. For example, genocide can only be considered biopolitical if it is motivated by a state-racist agenda. Killing one's enemies in war for the sake of glory, executing lawbreakers in order to punish those who have defied the dominance of the prince, and sacrificing human beings to gain supernatural favor are non-biopolitical acts because they negate life without any kind of biopolitical affirmation. Meanwhile, killing a suspected terrorist as a threat to biological life does include a biopolitical element.

There is another alternative to biopolitics, which has been dubbed *affirmative biopolitics*. This elusive category consists of unconventional approaches to the juxtaposition of political power and life. Michael Hardt⁸²² has argued that Foucault⁸²³ tried to sketch an alternative to the current biopolitical order in his final Collège de France course *La courage de la vérité* (*The Courage of Truth*). Here, Foucault brings up a militant way of life called *parrhēsia*, which was led by the ancient Cynics. This unusual way of conducting oneself required putting one's life and reputation at constant risk by always speaking frankly (*franc-parler*).⁸²⁴ In other words, the Cynics were always supposed to speak truthfully without flatteries and falsehoods even when the potential results of doing so were harmful or even life-threatening. In this non-biopolitical mode of living, (perceived) truth overcame the importance of life itself.

Agamben, too, has attempted to define a new kind of politics of life, which he approaches through a concept called *form-of-life*. This alternative to biopolitics has to do with the *bios* and the *zoē* becoming enclosed with each other in a manner that would no longer allow for the separation of bare life, which he sees as the foundation of the biopolitical order.⁸²⁵ Esposito has discussed a similar notion, which he calls simply *affirmative biopolitics*. The logic of this power of life is described tentatively as a reversal of Nazi thanatopolitics *over* life and as a way of understanding life as a unity – “no part of it can be destroyed in favor of another.”⁸²⁶ Many others have gone on to suggest other examples of affirmative biopolitics or alternative political approaches to life, including but not limited to the gay or queer mode of life⁸²⁷ and the life of Eastern European revolutionaries.⁸²⁸

I would like to point out that the notion of affirmative biopolitics is somewhat misleading. As we have discussed previously, all forms of biopolitics seek to *affirm* life in some manner. This is arguably the most important definition of the concept. Even when biopolitical practices inflict political or literal death

⁸²² Michael Hardt, “Militant Life.” *New Left Review* 64 (2010): 151–160.

⁸²³ Michel Foucault, *La courage de la vérité: Le gouvernement de soi et des autres II: Cours au Collège de France (1983–1984)*, ed. Frédéric Gros (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2009), 247–266.

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁵ See Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 188.

⁸²⁶ Esposito, *Bíos*, 194.

⁸²⁷ Lauri Siisiäinen, “Foucault and Gay Counter-Conduct,” *Global Society* 2, no. 2 (2016): 301–319. See also the first and thus far only book-length study regarding the various alternatives to biopolitics written by the same author: Lauri Siisiäinen, *Foucault, Biopolitics and Resistance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

⁸²⁸ Sergei Prozorov, “Foucault’s Affirmative Biopolitics: Cynic Parrhesia and the Biopower of the Powerless,” *Political Theory* 45, no. 6 (2015): 801–823.

upon some parts of the population with the help of sovereign power, they always seek to optimize the specific forms of life that are seen as their primary target. If this was not the case, such practices could not be considered biopolitical in the first place. Affirmation of life leaves the door open for an element of oppression, domination, and even racism (both in the narrow ethnic and the broader Foucauldian meanings of the word). For these reasons, I would prefer to use concepts such as the *alternative politics of life* and *purely affirmative biopolitics* instead of relying on the notion of affirmative biopolitics without any further clarifications.

I offer two separate suggestions because it is important to identify two kinds of “affirmative biopolitics.” Firstly, there is a form of somewhat traditional politics of life that simply affirms all life without undesirable side effects, including but not limited to the literal destruction of life. We can perhaps witness hints of this pure affirmation by examining some of the biopolitical implementations practiced by today’s democratic welfare societies (this is not to say that all forms of biopolitics practiced by such societies are always affirmative). I would prefer to describe this approach to the politics of life as *purely affirmative biopolitics*.⁸²⁹ The second category reorganizes the entire connection between life and politics in a truly alternative manner. This kind of “affirmative biopolitics” is not actually biopolitical at all; it exceeds this classification instead of simply being its “optimal” or most affirmative form. Therefore, I would prefer to describe this latter category as an *alternative politics of life*. This kind of non-biopolitical approach could perhaps be initiated through a notion such as *parrhēsia*.

Bodin does not offer a program of affirmative biopolitics, at least in the latter meaning of the word. His approaches to life are often extremely controlling and even racist (understood here in the Foucauldian sense of the word). However, we can still learn a lot from the diverse forms of biopolitics that we do find from his works. Furthermore, gaining a deeper understanding of the various arrangements of power could get us closer to fulfilling one of Foucault’s goals. During a conversation with Duccio Trombadori, Foucault explained that he analyzed the mechanisms of power because he believed that doing so could allow the repressed to become conscious of the power structures surrounding them. In this way, he might be able to help some people escape their personal predicaments:

When I study the mechanisms of power, I try to analyze their specificity: nothing is more foreign to me than the idea of a “Master” who imposes his own law. Rather than indicating the presence of a “master,” I worry about comprehending the effective mechanisms of domination; and I do it so that those who are inserted in certain relations of power, who are implicated in them, might escape them through their actions

⁸²⁹ Such a statement calls for a comparison with Sergei Prozorov’s 2019 work, *Democratic Biopolitics: Popular Sovereignty and the Power of Life*, which does not pertain to the question of affirmative biopolitics per se despite the fact that the two categories share some (limited) similarities. Instead of concentrating “on resistance to and refusal of biopolitical powers in the name of democracy,” Prozorov’s book “focuses on the more positive or affirmative practices of fashioning our lives in a democratic space.” Sergei Prozorov, *Democratic Biopolitics: Popular Sovereignty and the Power of Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 6, 187.

of resistance and rebellion, might transform them in order not to be subjugated any longer.⁸³⁰

While Bodin's political thought does not provide any answers concerning the alternative politics of life, it should not be seen as a homogenous bundle of state racism, either; in fact, some of Bodin's suggestions seem reminiscent of the more affirming forms of biopolitics. For example, he wants to take care of the poor in order to keep the commonwealth in optimal health both figuratively and literally. Providing nourishment, education, and employment are still seen as suitable ways to safeguard public health, while trying to keep diseases from spreading has become more topical than ever since the Spanish flu of 1918. These kinds of biopolitical practices are mostly, if not purely, affirmative, since they do not seem to require the destruction of other lifeforms in order to reach their goal of maximizing and optimizing life. The biopolitical elements in Bodin's oeuvre seem to thus range from one extreme to another, even though he does not yet exceed biopolitics altogether by introducing an alternative politics of life.

Gaining a deeper understanding of these diverse forms of biopolitical governing could perhaps help us become more efficient at recognizing some of the challenges we may be facing today and tomorrow. After establishing that biopolitics is not actually omnipresent and that the concept is instead flanked from both sides by non-biopolitical alternatives, we must still admit that it plays an enormous role in today's political landscape. This is probably why the notion has had such a wide appeal. Biopolitics makes sense – it is an intuitive theory that can be witnessed practically everywhere around us.

8.3.2 Future Challenges

Biopolitics remains relevant for now. Furthermore, it would appear that the notion is also still far from becoming obsolete or irrelevant anytime soon. Instead, more and more biopolitical questions are being posed every single day. Many of the emerging difficulties related to the politics of life have to do with technological developments in fields such as artificial intelligence, medicine, and biotechnology, which force us to consider their potentially life-changing characteristics. Sooner or later, we could be faced with issues such as manipulating human DNA, neural implantation, and, ultimately, even a reality where something close to consciousness might exist outside our organic human bodies. Innovations such as these could help us deal with some of our current biopolitically charged problems (cancer could perhaps be cured in a matter of seconds, traffic deaths could conceivably be lowered close to zero, and we might no longer be bound by the biological death of our bodies). Meanwhile, some of these developments could lead us toward new and unequalled biopolitical crises. We need to ask how a society of mentally and physically superior “master race” will treat the unaltered and thus obsolete bodies of the poor who are left without

⁸³⁰Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 173–174.

“designer genetics” and performance-enhancing implants. A comparison to *Brave New World’s* biological class society seems to write itself.⁸³¹

Unfortunately, it would seem that we do not have to resort to predicting the future in order to find an unprecedented crisis caused by technological developments. We are already struggling with human-created climate change – an unrivaled challenge capable of causing humanitarian disasters of the largest imaginable magnitude. The specific threats related to this larger disaster include mass extinctions, extreme weather patterns, shortages of the necessities of life, and large parts of the world becoming uninhabitable, just to name some. Life as we know it is facing an existential crisis that can be seen as a biopolitical threat that might require biopolitical interventions.

The global response to Covid-19 is another example of today’s biopolitics in full action. The global pandemic forced many societies into varying states of lockdown in order to protect their populations. The state of exception haunted all inhabited continents. Initially, most people seemed to accept the temporary restrictions, but a notion of exaggerated control was also brought up, perhaps most notably by none other than Agamben,⁸³² who published a series of poorly received⁸³³ texts claiming that the strong response to the matter was excessive, and that this allegedly flu-like virus was simply being used as an excuse for establishing a state of exception. The opposition against the preventive measures also took other forms: while some denied the existence or seriousness of the emergency, others argued that there are more important things than health or life itself. These people made the essentially state-racist statement that preserving a functioning economy was more farsighted than making the heavy sacrifices deemed necessary in order to save the maximum number of (elderly) lives.

Texas lieutenant governor Dan Patrick made himself the face of such thinking during the early stages of the crisis when he stated that “there are more important things than living”⁸³⁴ while asserting that the older folks, including himself, ought to face the risk of dying for the sake of the country, the economy, and future generations. Declaring that a functioning economy is a necessary precondition for achieving the optimal level of wellbeing is, of course, in accordance with the logic of biopolitics. In other words, even though the economic rationality seems to limit biopolitical care in some sense, the two logics

⁸³¹ In Aldous Huxley’s dystopian novel, the people of a futuristic world state live in a hierarchical society where predetermined classes correspond with people’s mental capacities, which are decreased artificially before “birth” in order to suit the requirements of their tasks and lifestyles. Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998).

⁸³² See Agamben’s first Covid-19 related text in Italian: Giorgio Agamben: “L’invenzione di un’epidemia,” *Quodlibet*, February 26, 2020, <https://www.quodlibet.it/giorgio-agamben-l-invenzione-di-un-epidemia>. English translations of this and other texts related to the pandemic can be found in Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Sergio Benvenuto, “Coronavirus and Philosophers,” *European Journal of Psychoanalysis*, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/coronavirus-and-philosophers/>.

⁸³³ See, for example, Jean-Luc Nancy’s response in Italian: Jean-Luc Nancy, “Eccezione virale,” *Antinomie*, February 27, 2020, <https://antinomie.it/index.php/2020/02/27/eccezione-virale/>.

⁸³⁴ Doha Madani, “Dan Patrick on coronavirus: ‘More important things than living,’” *NBC News*, April 21, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news-us-news/texas-lt-gov-dan-patrick-reopening-economy-more-important-things-n1188911>.

are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are believed to share a complex bond that dates back to their shared birthplace in the *oikos*, the private household, where taking care of the *oikonomia*, or economics, meant amplifying the mere life of its inhabitants.

The logic of political economy as a science is a distinctly modern idea that defines the modern form of biopolitics that we recognize today. The more recent versions of life-affirming politics have often been self-limited by the ideas of (neo)liberalism and the associated modern arts of governing. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Western biopolitical societies do not tend to function like absolutist police states. To quote Foucault, the logic of liberal government seeks to govern “at the border of the too much and too little, between the maximum and minimum.”⁸³⁵ This logic should not be regarded as a limit to modern biopolitics per se, but simply as one of its defining features. This is why Dean has argued that we are not faced with a “rejection of bio-political regulation, but a way of managing it.”⁸³⁶ Despite the contrasting nature of frugal government and hands-on intervention, liberal governing seems to find ways of embracing certain elements of biopolitics. According to this logic, constrained governing provides the best possible circumstances for the wellbeing of the population.⁸³⁷ Despite their immeasurable differences, the modern neoliberal state, the socialist state, and the fascist state are all biopolitical. Consequently, the rise of the current versions of neoliberalism does not imply the end of the biopolitical era; instead, it only signals the fact that biopolitical governing has assumed its latest form.

Foucault, who had severed his ties with the communist movement, found himself in support of the (in a sense) anti-statist “second left” (*deuxieme gauche*). For him, neoliberalism appeared as a pathway to more resistance and less (moral) governing, biopolitical regulation, normalization and discipline – it represented an escape from the shackles of the kind of technologies that the state was practicing at the time (without going against the state per se).⁸³⁸ Neoliberalism appeared as a more tolerant alternative that allowed for plurality, the flourishing of minorities, and the freedom of viewing one’s way of life as an experiment.⁸³⁹ It may be argued that the ideal version of neoliberalism differs from the previous normalizing technologies of power (biopolitics and discipline) in that it seeks to govern people’s behavior instead of subjectivizing them.⁸⁴⁰ In reality, however, the new art of government seems to rely on the same old coercive technologies that, for example, force the unemployed to take on unpaid internships.⁸⁴¹

Foucault emphasized the liberal logic of frugal government on a larger scale, but the individual level seems just as important. I believe that the need for “personal freedom” is one of today’s biopolitics’ key characteristics (and inhibitors). While this is nothing new, the pandemic has highlighted the fact that

⁸³⁵ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 19.

⁸³⁶ Dean, *Governmentality*, ch. 5.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*, ch. 6.

⁸³⁸ Mitchell Dean and Daniel Zamora, *Le dernier homme et la fin de la Révolution: Foucault après Mai 68* (Montreal: Lux Éditeur, 2019), 48, 60–73, 116–127.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 154–160.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 168–169.

there are those who believe that complying with the regulations and suggestions made by health officials ought to be considered as something that the individual can choose not to follow. Smoking despite restrictions and health campaigns can be seen as a prominent example of such defiance. The dangers of tobacco use have become universally acknowledged, and there are widespread efforts toward achieving smoke-free societies. The biopolitical machine seems to have been put into full action. Smokers are frowned upon, their drug of choice is becoming increasingly expensive, and their everyday life is now complicated by different kinds of rules and regulations that are meant to protect the smokers and those around them. However, people still seem to expect a certain level of liberty when it comes to governing their own bodies. Restrictive biopolitical advances therefore need to be strategic and gradual, as they are most likely met with at least some form of resistance. In other words, the people's desire for "personal freedom" seems to set a sturdy boundary against the introduction of excessive biopolitical interventions.

Traffic deaths can be used as another example of this logic. It seems probable that self-driving technology will eventually become the new norm; after all, the first vehicles with such capacities have already rolled out of factories. When all cars have been equipped to navigate the roads without human input, there should remain no logical reason for manual driving because computers can complete the same task far more safely and efficiently. Insurance companies might even refuse payment for the damages of those who were engaged in controlling their vehicles at the time of an accident. Even though an immeasurable number of lives and money could be saved by taking this small step, it is easy to predict that there will, nevertheless, be those who demand to retain the freedom of driving their cars "the old-fashioned way."

If the opposition to such biopolitical interventions was to become heated enough, change could be delayed indefinitely. Despite resistance, there seems to be no reason to think that the end of biopolitics is approaching anytime soon. The existence of biological human life does not necessitate biopolitics, but biopolitics could become irrelevant in a world where biology no longer places boundaries on human life (which could perhaps eventually happen in some form due to the emergence of a self-aware artificial intelligence and the ability to "upload" one's consciousness into a server). A similar statement can be made regarding opposition to biopolitical interventions – resistance is always inherent to the manifestation of power that it seeks to resist. This biopolitical cat-and-mouse game is yet to show any signs of stopping

To conclude, we ought to ask what historical sources in general and Bodin's political thought in particular can reveal to us about today's and tomorrow's biopolitical ideas and practices. I would like to argue that looking into the history of biopolitics helps us draw a more complete picture of the diverse forms of modern governing and their genealogies. Studying these issues may help us evade the tragedies caused by some objectionable interventions into life. Understanding the history of this ongoing phenomenon can also expand our conceptions of modern politics more generally.

The fact that Bodin seems to be one of the progenitors of modern biopolitical ideas, which he adapts from even older sources, reveals that the biopolitical mindset is buried deep into the very foundation of Western politics. The Angevin's robust political thought continues to teach us important lessons about the birth and revival of modern biopolitics despite its most appalling qualities (such as his relentless misogyny and the desire to hunt witches) – and also exactly because of them. Indeed, exploring Bodin's political thought enlightens us about biopolitics' affirming aspects while also demonstrating some of its ugliest manifestations, many of which continue to exist in some form through current (and upcoming) forms of biopolitics.

As we have witnessed, again and again, the old biopolitical discourse has persisted in a somewhat recognizable form from early modernity until today while new biopolitical practices continue to emerge in the face of extraordinary challenges. The biopolitical era prevails. Furthermore, because we concur with all significant authorities on the matter by stating that biopolitics defines the current era like no other, it would appear unconvincing to argue that we have surpassed modernity completely into "postmodernity" instead of describing our current epoch simply as that of "late modernity." That is to say, at least the political logic seems to have remained fundamentally unchanged. Of course, there are a plethora of other factors in play when it comes to demarcating historical eras; this is but an initial push – one argument amongst many to come.

9 CONCLUSIONS

This study has aimed to establish an in-depth biopolitical reading of Bodin's political thought. Because the matter at hand has been approached previously from different Foucauldian perspectives by thinkers such as Berns, Ojakangas, and Senellart, our task consisted of familiarizing ourselves with the prevailing arguments, comparing them with one another, and then developing them further whenever possible. After offering an extended reflection on the population-political (*avant la lettre*) aspects in Bodin's oeuvre, we used our newfound insights to answer two additional questions pertaining to the notion of biopolitics itself, which also helped us complete the reading of the Angevin as a biopolitical thinker: 1) what is the debated connection between sovereign power and biopolitics, and 2) did biopolitics exist before full modernity?

After explaining the general outlines of the work in the introductory chapter, we moved on to two chapters to provide the necessary background to the central themes of our project: the theory of biopolitics and Bodin's political thought. More specifically, in chapter two, we discussed some of the most significant debates concerning the notion and history of biopolitics as presented to us by our four key theorists Foucault, Agamben, Esposito, and Ojakangas. We focused particularly on our two research questions: the contested periodization of the birth of biopolitics and the potential connection between sovereign power and biopolitical governing. The careful preparation of a theoretical foundation made it possible for us to construct our own biopolitical reading of Bodin's political thought in the later stages of the work.

In chapter three, we provided a short biographical sketch regarding Bodin's tumultuous life as a jurist, a multi-dimensional author, and a political figure during the time of great religious discord. We took some time to list the Angevin's greatest achievements, but we also looked into some of his most notable controversies, many of which seem to have stemmed from his ambiguous religious standing. Next, we included a glimpse into the fundamentals of his political thought while focusing especially on his famed theory of absolute,

perpetual, and indivisible sovereignty.⁸⁴² Finally, we discussed his current role in the field of political theory and looked at some of the reasons why his classic work of political theory is so seldom read despite its enormous historical and theoretical significance.

After the three introductory chapters, we began to look for population-political elements in Bodin's political texts. We aimed to construct a fully fleshed-out understanding of him, not only as the progenitor of the modern theory of sovereignty, but also as a biopolitical thinker before the so-called biopolitical era, which would eventually help us tackle our two additional research questions. We set out to prepare a close reading of the Angevin's most famous work, the *République*, while also supplementing our point of view by discussing his other politically charged books, most importantly the *Methodus* and the *Démonomanie*, as well as his responses to Malestroit's *Paradoxes*. We uncovered several instances of biopolitical governing from his political philosophy during the four ensuing chapters. Let us go through our most significant findings briefly one by one.

In the fourth chapter, we discussed Bodin's pro-natalist and anti-abortionist populationism as well as his assessments vis-à-vis the largest possible number of people as the greatest imaginable wealth in a commonwealth.⁸⁴³ Bodin argued against Greek birth control policies, which were used to limit population size, while expressing his strong support for Roman-style marriage laws devised to maximize the legitimate forms of reproduction.⁸⁴⁴ We also looked into his notions about establishing healthy cities that were able to provide the necessities of life for the people.⁸⁴⁵ The Angevin suggested various strategies for removing crime, idleness, epidemics, societal unrest, and the negative effects of both poverty and slavery in a manner that could be argued to resemble an early program of "social policy" – his plans for fighting these issues included innovative takes on education, employment, city planning, nurture for the needy, and even the gradual liberation of slaves.⁸⁴⁶

In chapter five we looked into Bodin's desire to resurrect the Roman (or as he believed, initially Greek⁸⁴⁷) magistracy of censors. Besides discussing the censors' role in gathering statistics and policing the people, we also focused on three additional biopolitically significant issues related to the ancient office: firstly, the censors had an explicit role in promoting childbirth, marriage, and decent family life.⁸⁴⁸ Secondly, they penetrated the contested perimeter between the political and the private, which has been described as a sign of biopolitical modernity by the key theorists of biopolitics.⁸⁴⁹ Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the censors were supposed to get rid of objectionable individuals

⁸⁴² See Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.8, 124, I.10, 221–223, II.1, 224, 226.

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*, V.2, 705–706.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, V.2, 705–706, VI.2, 888.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, I.1, 9.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I.5, 44–68.

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, VI.1, 835.

⁸⁴⁸ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, VI.I, 631; see Heinsohn and Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 49–50.

⁸⁴⁹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.2, 10; see Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 3–4; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 24.

(described as parasitic vermin or wolves that prey among the sheep) out of the commonwealth.⁸⁵⁰ Therefore, they were attempting to control the health of the commonwealth as a whole through the logic of a medical purge.⁸⁵¹ This last biopolitical function of the censors coincides seamlessly with the Foucauldian conception of biopolitical state racism, or the logic of removing internal threats to the population in order to optimize the lives of the remaining people.⁸⁵²

In chapter six, we discussed the supposed bodily influence of climates, humors, and temperaments. Bodin believed that these issues had a major impact on the physical human body and its behavior. He argued that sexual life, physical and mental health, as well as political customs, were all affected by specific climates and microclimates that existed within them.⁸⁵³ The alleged impact of the environments was also noticeable on the larger scale of cities and even that of entire commonwealths. According to Bodin, distinct places were to be ruled and governed in a manner that was fitting to their habitants' natural inclinations – like a good architect, a wise ruler was supposed to become acquainted with the “materials” available in the vicinity of their “construction site.”⁸⁵⁴ However, while it was extremely important to establish commonwealths in accordance with their specific climates, Bodin also argued that at least some of the natural preconditions could be steered toward a more desirable direction with the help of proper forms of discipline and a sufficient amount of time.⁸⁵⁵

The seventh chapter focused on Bodin's notorious witch hunt manifesto, the *Démonomanie*. In this politically charged work, Bodin described witchcraft as a real and tangible menace to people's lives, the stability of the commonwealth, and the existence of the humankind.⁸⁵⁶ To kill perceived witches meant to diminish the villainous forces that were causing impotence, barrenness, abortions, the death of children, physical illnesses, infertility of the land, the destruction of food sources, and the eventual downfall of great states.⁸⁵⁷ Humanity itself seemed to be at risk as well – Bodin insisted that Satan was causing these (biopolitically charged) disasters in order to wipe out all of humankind.⁸⁵⁸ While most of the incentives behind the witch hunts were religious, the issue carried explicit political importance, especially for Bodin who described it as an utmost important matter of the state.⁸⁵⁹ Because witches were to be either cured or destroyed, we argued that the Angevin's agenda can be read as a biopolitical solution to a cluster of biopolitically motivated problems.

In the eighth chapter, we gathered our findings in order to argue that Bodin's political thought contains an unmistakable biopolitical element. By doing

⁸⁵⁰ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 846.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid.

⁸⁵² Foucault, “*Il faut défendre la société*”, 228.

⁸⁵³ See for example Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 579, 683, 686, 692.

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid, V.1, 666.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid, V.1, 666, 698.

⁸⁵⁶ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, II.4, 178–179, IV.5, 366–372; see Heinshohn and Steiger, “*Inflation and Witchcraft*,” 41–42.

⁸⁵⁷ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, IV.5, 366–372.

⁸⁵⁸ See for example *ibid*, 13, II.1, 157.

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid*, IV.5, 393–401.

so we were able to suggest new perspectives to a somewhat neglected area in Bodin studies – his population politics (*avant la lettre*). Furthermore, we also provided answers to our two additional research questions, which helped complete our biopolitical reading of the Angevin’s political thought. Firstly, we established that both biopolitics and sovereign power played a significant role in the *République*. We argued that the two technologies cannot join together in their fullest forms without resorting in state racism that includes the “old” power to kill working in favor of the “new” power to make live. However, we maintained that the two can still co-exist and reinforce one another without interruptions if the radical core of sovereign power is diluted or functions on a separate level. This form of co-existence can lead to mutually beneficial results such as the apprehension of wrongdoers who would otherwise escape the rigid form of the law. Furthermore, it would appear that biopolitics can appropriate legislation for its own uses in a manner that renders sovereign power only a nominal part of the equation.

We maintained that all of these cases, that where the technologies are co-existent and reinforce each other without interruptions (laws and governing working with a similar agenda),⁸⁶⁰ that where the form of law is adopted for biopolitical purposes (biopolitical marriage laws),⁸⁶¹ as well as that which involves an episodic fuller synchronicity of biopolitics and the deathly form of sovereign power through state racism,⁸⁶² are visible in Bodin’s political thought. Therefore, we concurred with Foucault by stating that the birth of biopolitics does not necessarily imply the replacement of sovereign power.⁸⁶³ We also argued against Agamben’s⁸⁶⁴ challenge to Foucault by claiming that the birth of sovereignty does not require the emergence of an alleged biopolitical subject exemplified by the *homo sacer*. Instead, the two technologies of power seem to remain their own separate entities: even though they can be useful to each other, they achieve this without the necessity of a hidden, thanatopolitical bond. Strictly speaking, the *homo sacer* should not even be understood as the paradigmatic example of the biopolitical subject who is, instead, exemplified by they whose life is affirmed the most and not negated in any shape or form, just as Ojakangas has argued.⁸⁶⁵

Secondly, Bodin seems to play a significant role during what could be described as the renaissance of biopolitical ideas and practices. As we have witnessed repeatedly, the Angevin was a master of adopting classical notions and transplanting them into his own context of early modern France. Moreover, many of these adapted ideas were already biopolitical to begin with. Our findings seemed to suggest that the biopolitical elements in Bodin’s thought represent a prime example of biopolitics right before the biological processes of life, and their optimization was made the ultimate target of almost all politics.

⁸⁶⁰ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 846.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid, VI.2, 888.

⁸⁶² See for example, *ibid*, VI.1, 840–841.

⁸⁶³ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité 1*, 179–180.

⁸⁶⁴ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 71–72.

⁸⁶⁵ See Ojakangas, “Impossible Dialogue on Bio-power,” 6.

While I see no reason to disagree with Esposito⁸⁶⁶ in that modernity can, in a way, be seen as the sole properly biopolitical era in recorded history, there appears to be no reason to deny the fact that biopolitical ideas and practices predate this very recent point in history. Suppose we approach the issue from the perspective of Ojakangas. In that case, we realize that antiquity, which was already “biopolitical to the bone”⁸⁶⁷ and did not have a notion of sovereignty, was, in a sense, more radically biopolitical than Hobbes,⁸⁶⁸ who placed survival at the top of the political hierarchy but seems to have omitted an extended discussion on actual biopolitical mechanisms.

In fact, it is rather easy to find examples of pre-modern political interventions into life. As we have witnessed, Bodin and his ancient sources provide us with more than enough evidence to suggest that biopolitical governing was taking place in the pre-modern era. Furthermore, it would appear that we cannot explain the presence of such ideas and practices without making at least some kind of allusion to the notion of biopolitics. Therefore, we decided to propose a theoretical contribution in the form of *biopolitics before the biopolitical era*, which may permit us to analyze the history of the phenomenon with further clarity and a decreased need for polemics. This new conceptual tool helps us maintain the valid Foucauldian⁸⁶⁹ idea of a narrow biopolitical era supported by Esposito,⁸⁷⁰ while still permitting us to expand our understanding regarding the distinct forms that the politics of life has taken before full modernity as suggested by Ojakangas⁸⁷¹ (and in a different sense by Agamben⁸⁷²).

Finally, we looked into the genealogical idea of reading the history of biopolitics as the history of something that is still going on today. This means that cultivating a more profound understanding of how the technologies of power operated in the past may allow us to better understand their more recent manifestations. Furthermore, expanding our knowledge concerning the roots of modern biopolitics may also allow us to seek alternatives for some undesirable forms that the phenomenon still keeps assuming today. Bodin’s political thought offers a large variety of biopolitical examples ranging from purely affirmative biopolitics to thanatopolitical state racism. This serves as a great reminder of the fact that biopolitics is neither “good” nor “bad,” because the concept encompasses everything from genuinely affirmative politics to state-racist purges. Such an assertion seems to hold true both in Bodin’s case and in general. When we examine the Angevin’s political thought from a biopolitical perspective, the only thing that seems to be missing is a clear push toward establishing a truly

⁸⁶⁶ According to Esposito, the modern immunitary paradigm, which includes biopolitics, was prototyped by Hobbes. Esposito, *Bíos*, 46.

⁸⁶⁷ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 1–2.

⁸⁶⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 87.

⁸⁶⁹ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 33–36.

⁸⁷⁰ Esposito, *Bíos*, 53–54.

⁸⁷¹ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 18–19.

⁸⁷² Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 1–12.

meta-biopolitical politics of life such as those proposed tentatively by Foucault,⁸⁷³ Agamben,⁸⁷⁴ and others.

From today's point of view, Bodin was a complicated character. Many of his biopolitical ideas, especially his desire to persecute witches, appear archaic, while others seem more topical than ever. For example, his arguments for feeding and educating the poor in order to prevent sedition and popular diseases resonates rather well with today's democratic and affirmative manifestations of biopolitics. Bodin seems to teach us is that the biopolitical rationality is situated deep in the very backbone of our political order. Hence, our findings appear to suggest that a persistent (yet also continuously and contingently transformed) biopolitical discourse establishes a clear link between early modernity and today.

Indeed, upcoming biopolitical challenges seem to point toward the fact that we are still far from overcoming the ongoing biopolitical era. All key theorists seem to agree that biopolitical governing defines modernity. The fact that biopolitics continues to characterize most areas of life (if not all of them) could perhaps be used to argue that we have not transcended modernity in the substantial manner that would allow us to use the term "postmodernity." Instead, it would appear that we are still living in the era of "late modernity," which continues to be dominated by the politics of life as defined and limited by the logic of neoliberalism. However, a broader approach is needed in order to confirm such a claim.

When it comes to situating this current work in the larger field of biopolitical studies and describing its connection to the two giants, Foucault and Agamben, whose efforts are bound to define all those who follow them, our approach coincides more with Foucault's original viewpoint than it does with Agamben's bold re-interpretation. That being said, our work draws heavily from both sources. When it comes to the debate concerning the relationship between sovereign power and biopolitics, our view coincides almost precisely with Foucault's initial analysis. The one prominent exception to the rule is constituted by the question regarding the history of biopolitics; this is where Agamben exceeds Foucault's untenable limitations by claiming that biopolitics does, in fact, predate modernity.

However, there is one major problem with Agamben's brilliant assertion – it comes attached to another, flawed argument that presupposes the necessarily conjoined nature of the two technologies.⁸⁷⁵ As we have witnessed on several occasions throughout this work, such an argument fails to capture the affirmation and care that exists within the very core of Foucauldian biopolitics. We decided to mend this issue by following Ojakangas, who has made a strong argument for an earlier periodization of biopolitics while maintaining the need for a conceptual separation between biopolitics and sovereign power. Therefore, I would like to consider this current work first and foremost as a continuation of a greater re-

⁸⁷³ Foucault, *La courage de la vérité*, 247–266.

⁸⁷⁴ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 188.

⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 1–12.

interpretation regarding the history of biopolitics commenced by Ojakangas and his pioneering book *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*.

As is so often the case, completing this current project seems to evoke more questions than it ends up answering. Some of our findings regarding the history of biopolitics and the disputed relationship between sovereignty and biopolitics remain subject to confirmation through a wider selection of case studies. Bodin's era seems to be an extremely fertile ground for such endeavors. The "renaissance of biopolitics" that took place between the late Middle Ages and early modernity remains somewhat neglected and, thus, largely unmapped from such a perspective. The political philosophy, utopian writings, and governmental practices of the era seem ripe for a closer biopolitical reading. It would be intriguing to expand our knowledge of how widespread these ideas were and how exactly Bodin's ideas compare with those of his (near) contemporaries.

We should also continue to pay attention to the biopolitical questions of today and tomorrow. Studying biopolitics allows us to comprehend real-life responses to challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic or human-created climate change. An increased level of knowledge concerning the politics of life might also help us prevent the various potentially biopolitical threats that could emerge due to advancements in biotechnology, genetic engineering, and artificial intelligence. Being familiar with the general theory of biopolitics, its distinct historical forms, and their specific genealogies could allow us to dodge some of the biopolitical disasters that often occur despite our best intentions.

Finally, we should be aware that there are obviously several key differences between Bodin's political theory and Foucault's notions, which saw the light of day some 400 years after the Angevin's major work. Bodin still echoed the old saying "the King never dies,"⁸⁷⁶ while Foucault made us realize that it was already high time "to cut off the King's head"⁸⁷⁷ (the difference being that Bodin's statement was practical, whereas Foucault's was theoretical). However, this does not erase the fact that the two thinkers' systems of thought share several intriguing similarities: most importantly, both had a common interest in political interventions into life (although, once again, Bodin's take had to do with conceptualizing the optimal society, whereas Foucault was merely absorbed in analyzing the genealogy of power).

Foucault analyzes the historical distinction between sovereign power and governing which Bodin had made centuries ago by implying that there is a world of difference between the mechanics of power that operated within the sphere of law and those that were based on more delicate forms of governing (such as the censors).⁸⁷⁸ As we have witnessed time and again, many of these interventions were unambiguously biopolitical. Therefore, it would appear that our findings help highlight a single major flaw in Foucault's inspired analysis – his periodization of biopolitics as an exclusively modern phenomenon. In conclusion,

⁸⁷⁶ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.8, 160.

⁸⁷⁷ Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings: 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 121.

⁸⁷⁸ See Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 86.

I would like to offer my attempt to overcome this inconsistency by arguing that Bodin's political thought contains a distinct element of *biopolitics before the biopolitical era*.

SUMMARY IN FINNISH

Tämä työ pureutui ranskalaisen poliittisen filosofin ja juristin Jean Bodinin (1529/30–1596) ajattelun biopoliittisiin piirteisiin eli niihin tapoihin, joilla hänen rakentamansa, mahdollisimman realistiseksi tarkoitettu, filosofispoliittinen ohjelma pyrki optimoimaan ja kontrolloimaan ihmisten materiaalista ja maallista elämää. Tutkimuksen lähtökohdasta teki nähdäkseni erityisen kiinnostavan se, että Bodin on tullut tunnetuksi ensisijaisesti modernin suvereniteettiteorian kehittäjänä, jota pidetään Michel Foucault'n⁸⁷⁹ aloittamassa teoriaperinteessä usein biovallan lähes ehdottomana vastakohtana. Näiden kahden niin kutsutun vallan teknologian välinen ero onkin varsin yksiselitteinen. Biovalta vaalii, optimoi ja maksimoi elämää, siinä missä despoottien absoluuttinen suvereeni valta tarkastelee alamaisiaan lain näkökulmasta. Se näkee heidät lähinnä sotajoukkoina, työläisinä ja veronmaksajina. Lisäksi Foucault esittää, että elämää optimoiva biovalta tulisi ymmärtää yksinomaan modernina, 1700- ja 1800-luvuilla kehittyneenä ilmiönä, jota suvereeni valta edeltää.⁸⁸⁰ Biopolitiikan ei siis tulisi hänen mukaansa ulottua lainkaan Bodinin aikakauteen, 1500-luvulle. Työni piti siis ottaa kantaa kahteen tutkijoita edelleenkin puhuttavaan perustavanlaatuisen kysymykseen biopolitiikasta: tulisiko se ymmärtää esimodernina ilmiönä, ja mikä on sen mahdollinen suhde suvereenin vallan teknologiaan?

Pyrkimyksenäni oli eristää Bodinin ajattelun biopoliittinen juonne hyödyntämällä foucault'laista genealogiaa (eli diskurssien sattumanvaraista historiallista kehittymistä tarkastelevaa metodia) poliittisen teorian ja aatehistorian kentillä. Bodin ei käyttänyt biopolitiikan käsitettä, joka vakiintui kunnolla vasta satoja vuosia hänen kuolemansa jälkeen Foucault'n kirjoituksissa. En siis ollut lähtökohtaisesti kiinnostunut biopolitiikasta lyhytikäisenä historiallisena käsitteenä, vaan pikemminkin teoreettisena analyysin välineenä, jollaisena myös Foucault itse käytti sitä. Keskeisenä tutkimusaineistoni hyödynsin Bodinin poliittisia tekstejä, etenkin hänen alun perin vuonna 1576 ranskaksi julkaisemaansa, myöhemmin merkittävästi laajentamaansa ja latinaksikin itse kääntämänsä, merkkiteosta *Les six livres de la République*.⁸⁸¹ Bodinin päätyön ohella käsittelyyni päätyi myös saman kirjoittajan muita poliittisesti virittyneitä teoksia, erityisesti hänen vuonna 1566 julkaistu ensimmäinen keskeinen työnsä, *Républiquen* teemoja ennakoiva *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*,⁸⁸² vuoden 1568 inflaatiota käsittelevä lyhyempi ekonominen kirjoitus *La response de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit touchant l'encherissement de toutes choses, & le moyen d'y remedier*⁸⁸³ ja

⁸⁷⁹ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 177–211.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 33–36.

⁸⁸¹ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*. Suurin osa viittauksistani kohdistuu Bodin-tutkijoiden keskuudessa vakiintuneen tavan mukaisesti vuoden 1583 Pariisin editioon, jota pidetään yleisesti teoksen parhaana ranskankielisenä versiona. Viittaan kuitenkin tarvittaessa myös muihin editioihin; erityisesti Bodinin omaan latinankieliseen vapaaseen käännökseen: Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*.

⁸⁸² Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*.

⁸⁸³ Bodin, *La response de Jean Bodin au Paradoxe de Malestroit*.

1580 julkaistu noituuden vastainen manifestinomainen kirja *De la démonomanie des sorciers*.⁸⁸⁴

Tehdäkseni Bodinin poliittisen ajattelun ymmärrettäväksi biopolitiikkateorian raameissa minun oli ensin otettava kantaa kahteen edellä mainittuun keskusteluun biopolitiikan käsitteestä ja historiasta. Keskeiset kysymykseni olivat: 1) Miten elämää optimoivan biopolitiikan ja siitä lähes kokonaan piittaamattoman suvereenin vallan välinen suhde on järjestynyt? Onko Foucault⁸⁸⁵ kenties oikeassa väittäessään, että nämä radikaalilla tavalla toisistaan poikkeavat vallan teknologiat eivät sulje toisiaan pois totaalaisesti, vaan ne voivat toimia hetkellisesti yhdessä tuhotakseen epätoivottuja väestönosia sen kokonaisedun nimissä (Foucault kutsuu tällaista menettelyä *valtiorasismiksi*)? Vai onko Giorgio Agamben⁸⁸⁶ ehkä lähempänä totuutta esittäessään, että ristiriitaiselta vaikuttavat vallan teknologiat ovatkin itseasiassa lähtökohtaisesti yhteen kietoutuneita, eikä niitä tulisi siksi edes yrittää erottaa toinen toisistaan? Kumpikaan näistä kiinnostavista selityksistä ei kuitenkaan onnistunut vangitsemaan Bodinin biopolitiittisen ajattelun koko kirjoa, sillä siihen näytti sisältyvän kuoleman politiikan ohella myös toisenlainen ajatus elämän maksimoimisesta ilman ulossulkemista.

2) Oliko biopolitiittisia ajatuksia ja käytäntöjä olemassa ennen Foucault'n määrittelemää biopolitiittista aikaa, kuten Agamben on esittänyt? Vaikka Agambenin spekulatiivinen avaus onkin kiinnostava, siihen sisältyy kuitenkin ainakin yksi merkittävä ongelma: väittäessään, että biopolitiikan historia tulisi ymmärtää laajemmin, hän tekee samalla edellä mainitun, kestäättömänä näyttäytyvän, yhtäläistyksen biopolitiikan ja suvereenin vallan käsitteiden välille. Tällöin hän näyttää kadottavan foucault'laisittain ymmärretyn biopolitiikan keskeisen ytimen, eikä siten tule käsitelleeksi elämää optimoivan biopolitiikan historiaa kuin korkeintaan välillisesti.

Mika Ojakankaan⁸⁸⁷ oivallinen historiallinen analyysi näyttää paikkaavan kummassakin aikaisemmassa näkökulmassa esiintyviä puutteita. Ojakangas osoittaa, että jo antiikin poliittiset tekstit ja käytännöt olivat läpikotaisin biopolitiittisia. Tästä huolimatta hän ei kuitenkaan hylkää Foucault'n spekuloidua biopolitiikan modernia nousua ja sen kanssa samoihin aikoihin tapahtuvaa suvereenin vallan heikkenemistä kokonaan, sillä ne näyttävät korreloivan jokseenkin hänen ehdottamansa vaihtoehdoisen aikajanan kanssa. Ojakankaan mukaan antiikissa valloillaan ollut biopolitiittinen diskurssi vaimeni tuonpuoleisen elämän ensisijaisuutta korostaneen kristillisen myöhäisantiikin ja varhaiskeskiajan myötä. Sama diskurssi alkoi kuitenkin voimistua uudestaan myöhäiskeskiajalla ja varhaismodernina aikana tapahtuneen laajemman antiikin kulttuurin renessanssin vanavedessä. Platonin ja Aristoteleen keskeisten poliittisten tekstien (erityisesti Platonin *Valtio-* *Valtiomies-* ja *Lait* -teosten sekä Aristoteleen *Politiikan*) latinankielisten käännösten myötä keskiöön palannut biopolitiittinen keskustelu kiihtyi entisestään modernin ajan kynnyksellä jokseenkin samalla tavalla, kuin

⁸⁸⁴ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*.

⁸⁸⁵ Foucault, "Il faut défendre la société", 228.

⁸⁸⁶ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 1-12.

⁸⁸⁷ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 1-6. Katso myös Ojakangas, "Michel Foucault and the Enigmatic Origins of Bio-Politics and Governmentality," 1-14.

mitä Foucault esitti myöhemmin omissa analyyseissään. Tämän tutkimuksen puitteissa tekemäni Bodinin poliittisten teosten analyysi Foucault'n määrittelemää modernia aikaa edeltävinä biopolitiisinä teksteinä tarjosi uniikin tulokulman kumpaankin biopolitiikan tutkijoita puhuttaneeseen kysymykseen, joihin pyrin vastaamaan käsittelyluvuissa tekemiäni löydösten valossa.

Esiteltyäni tutkimukseni yllä mainittuja lähtökohtia työn johdannossa, siirryin lukuun kaksi, jossa käsitelin kolmen keskeisen biopolitiikan teoreetikon Foucault'n, Agambenin ja Roberto Espositon näkemyksiä tutkielman ytimessä olevista kysymyksistä: biopolitiikan synnystä ja valtatekniikoiden välisestä suhteesta. Täydensin kolmen ydinajattelijan kantoja edellä mainittujen kysymysten pariin erikoistuneen Ojakankaan argumenteilla. Sain välittömästi huomata, että tarkastelun keskiöön valikoituneet biopolitiikan teoreetikot ovat erimielisiä kummankin lisätutkimuskysymyksemme tiimoilta: Foucault⁸⁸⁸ ja Ojakangas⁸⁸⁹ ymmärtävät, että biopolitiikan ja suvereenin vallan välinen valtiorasistinen suhde on väliaikainen ja ristiriitainen, muttei kuitenkaan täysin mahdoton. Agamben⁸⁹⁰ ja Esposito⁸⁹¹ puolestaan väittävät, että valtatekniikat ovat itse asiassa erottamattomia toisistaan. Mitä puolestaan tulee biopolitiikan historiaan, Foucault⁸⁹² ja Esposito⁸⁹³ esittävät, että kyseessä on yksiselitteisesti moderni teknologia, siinä missä Agamben⁸⁹⁴ ja Ojakangas⁸⁹⁵ päätyvät väittämään, että biopolitiikka tulisi ymmärtää huomattavasti varhaisempana ilmiönä (heidän argumenttinsa poikkeavat kuitenkin toisistaan merkittävästi; Agamben päätyy väitteeseensä spekulatiivisesti, Ojakangas puolestaan historiallisten esimerkkien avustuksella).

Alustava katsaus Bodinin poliittisiin teksteihin näytti tukevan ajatusta biopolitiikasta ja suvereenista vallasta toisistaan poikkeavina vallan teknologioina, jotka saattoivat kuitenkin toimia yhdessä tiettyjen ehtojen täytyessä. Toisen vallan teknologian olemassaolo ei vaikuttanut estävän toista, osittain ristiriitaista teknologiaa, toimimasta valtiorasismista lisäksi samanaikaisesti ikään kuin omalla tasollaan, tai silloin kun niiden ristiriitaiset ytimet (tappaminen ja eläväksi tekeminen) erotettiin toisistaan. Jotta Bodin voitiin asettaa tukevasti biopolitiiseen matriisiin, biopolitiikka tuli kuitenkin ymmärtää myös huomattavasti Foucault'n suppeissa ja pääosin spekulatiivisissa analyyseissä esitettyä varhaisempana ilmiönä. Bodinin biopolitiittiset ajatukset näyttivät juontuvan usein suoraan antiikin teksteistä – minkä vuoksi vaikutti ilmeiseltä, että myös Kreikan poliittista filosofiaa voitaisiin käsitellä biopolitiittisen kehyksen kautta.

Kolmas luku keskittyi esittelemään Bodinin kontribuutioita politiikan parissa niin teoriassa kuin käytännössäkin. Lukuisiin tieteenaloihin jälkensä jättäneen, veristen uskonsotien ja noitavainojen aikaan vaikuttaneen renessanssimie-

⁸⁸⁸ Foucault, *“Il faut défendre la société”*, 228.

⁸⁸⁹ Ojakangas, *“Impossible Dialogue on Bio-power,”* 26.

⁸⁹⁰ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 1–12.

⁸⁹¹ Esposito, *Bíos*, 57.

⁸⁹² Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 33–36.

⁸⁹³ Esposito, *Bíos*, 53–54.

⁸⁹⁴ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 1–12.

⁸⁹⁵ Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 18–19.

hen elämä oli kiehtova. Hän toimi hovien taustavaikuttajana ja kohtasi (mahdollisesti useita) syytöksiä liittyen hänen katolisen uskonsa väitettyyn epäortodoksisuuteen. Muiden seikkojen ohella, Bodinin suurimpiin onnistumisiin ja epäonnistumisiin pureutuneen lyhyen elämäkerrallisen osuuden jälkeen, keskityin erityisesti hänen kuuluisaan esitykseensä suvereeniudesta ikuisena, jakamattomana ja absoluuttisena valtiollisena valtana. Tämä valta on mahdollista tunnistaa sille ominaisesta oikeudesta tehdä, muuttaa ja kumota lakeja, joiden kautta sen omaava entiteetti (monarkki, aristokraatit tai demokraattinen enemmistö) kykenee komentamaan sekä yksittäisiä alamaisiaan että jokaista heistä yhdessä.⁸⁹⁶ Esiteltyäni Bodinin suvereniteettiteorian osatekijöitä ja niihin liittyviä moderneja debatteja käännyin vielä lopuksi pohtimaan sitä, miksi Bodinin renessanssijan poliittisten filosofian klassikoihin lukeutuvaa pääteosta luetaan nykyään enää harvoin, ja miksi sitä ei ole käännetty kokonaisuudessaan englanniksi 1600-luvun alun jälkeen (suomeksi sitä, tai mitään muutakaan Bodinin teoksista, ei ole käännetty vielä lainkaan). Vastaukset näihin kysymyksiin liittyvät epäilemättä yli tuhat sivua pitkän opuksen yleiseen hankaluuteen ja eri painosten sekä käännösten välisiin tulkintaa ja käännöstyötä vaikeuttaviin eroihin. Tässä työssä pyrin kuitenkin tarjoamaan jälleen uuden syyn lukea vanhojen ja modernien ajatusten välille omaperäisiä siltoja rakentavan Bodinin poliittisia tekstejä.

Neljännessä luvussa keskityin Bodinin väestöpolitiikkaan ja niin kutsuttuun "populationismiin" eli ihmisten määrää maksimoimaan pyrkivään politiikkaan. Bodin uskoi, että ihmisten suurin mahdollinen määrä tuli ymmärtää valtion merkittävimpänä voiman ja rikkauten lähteenä⁸⁹⁷ – siis ensiarvoisena poliittisena resurssina. Hän kannatti kansalaisten määrän lisäämistä kahdella toisistaan poikkeavalla tavalla: 1) antiikista tutut ja soveltuvilta osin myös renessanssiaikana kannatusta saaneet väestön rajoittamiseen, syntyvyyden säännöstelyyn ja imeväissurmiin liittyvät käytännöt oli ymmärrettävä järjenvastaisina ja hylättävä välittömästi⁸⁹⁸ 2) väestön määrää voitiin kasvattaa ottamalla käyttöön Rooman ensimmäisen keisarin Augustuksen säätämät avioliittolait, jotka tarjosivat merkittäviä etuja useita lapsia saaneille ja rankaisivat naimattomia ja lapsettomia korkeamman verotuksen kautta.⁸⁹⁹ Bodin oli kiinnostunut myös siitä, miten hyvin järjestetty valtio tulisi muodostaa – hänen mukaansa tällainen yhteisö kykeni takaamaan ihmisten terveyden ja muita elämän perusedellytyksiä.⁹⁰⁰ Orjuuden lakkauttamista jo varhaisessa historiallisessa vaiheessa kannattanut Bodin ehdotti vähäosaisten lasten ja orjien kouluttamista palkkatyöläisiksi ja argumenttoi edelleen ajankohtaiselta kuulostavalla tavalla, että köyhistä huolehtiminen hillitsisi kulkutautien leviämistä kaupungeissa.⁹⁰¹ Edellä mainitut keinot ja kaupungin sekä väestörakenteen harmoninen suunnittelu vähentäisivät hänen mukaansa eripuraa ihmisryhmien välillä sekä lisäisivät siten turvallisuutta koko valtion tasolla.

⁸⁹⁶ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.8, 124, I.10, 221–223, II.1, 224, 266.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid, V.2, 705–706.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid, IV.2, 888.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid, I.1, 9.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid, I.5, 44–68.

Viides luku käsitteli roomalaista väestönlaskentaa ja tarkastelua varten perustettua kensorivirastoa, jonka palauttamisen puolesta Bodin argumentoi voimakkaasti (uskoen kuitenkin, että kyseessä oli alun perin kreikkalainen keksintö, jonka roomalaiset omaksuivat vasta heidän jälkeensä).⁹⁰² Bodinin näkemyksiä on verrattu aikaisemmassa tutkimuskirjallisuudessa foucault'laisiin ajatuksiin modernista statistiikasta (eli hienostuneista tilastojen keräämisen tekniikoista) ja "poliisista" (ymmärrettynä tässä lakia valvovaa virkamieselintä laajemmin saksalaisen "poliisitieteen" käsitteen mukaisesti tietynlaisena uudenlaisten väestökysymystä käsittelevien *policyjen* tai poliittisten ohjelmien ja ohjenuorien nipuna).⁹⁰³ Pyrkimyksenäni oli kehittää näitä käsityksiä eteenpäin esittelemällä aikaisempaa laajempi biopoliittinen luenta uuden tulemisen tehneistä kensoreista: 1) Virastolla oli rooli avioliittojen ja lasten määrän lisäämisessä sekä syntyvyyden säätelyn, prostituution ja lasten surmaamisen vähentämisessä.⁹⁰⁴ 2) Kensorit läpäisivät väitetyt vahvan rajan yksityisen ja julkisen sfäärin välillä. Vaikka yksityinen ja julkinen ovatkin kiistämättä monilla tavoin toisistaan poikkeavia tiloja, julkisen hallinnan tunkeutuminen yksityisen piiriin on ymmärretty modernin biopolitiikan lähtökohtana, jota myös Bodinin pääteos näyttäisi ilmentävän.⁹⁰⁵ 3) Kensoreilla oli merkittävä rooli yhteiskuntaruumiin puhdistamisessa – sen tehtäviin kuului tunnistaa ja ajaa pois epätoivottuja väestönosia. Loismaiset parasitit, kunnan ihmisiä korruptoivat pahantekijät ja toimettomat vätykset tuli poistaa valtiosta lääketieteellistä logiikkaa seuraten ja tavalla, joka täyttää nähdäkseni foucault'laisen valtiorasismin määritelmän.⁹⁰⁶

Kuudennessa luvussa käsitelin Bodinin näkemyksiä ympäristön vaikutuksista ihmisiin ja politiikkaan. Antiikin ja keskiajan ilmastoajattelusta sekä humoraali- ja temperamenttiopeista ammentava, mutta samalla täysin uudenlaisista poliittisistä näkökulmista näitä kysymyksiä lähestyvä Bodin uskoi, että ilmastolla oli valtaisa vaikutus ihmisruumiisiin ja niiden toimintaan. Hallitsijan tai hallitsijoiden tuli olla tietoisia valtakunnassa asuvien ihmisten luonnollisista taipumuksista, sillä välinpitämättömyys näitä seikkoja kohtaan saattoi johtaa mittamattomaan tuhoon.⁹⁰⁷ Vaikka monarkia olikin Bodinin mukaan lähtökohtaisesti paras valtiomuoto, aristokratia tai demokratia saattoivat sopia joillekin valtioille paremmin riippuen niissä vallitsevista ilmastoista.⁹⁰⁸ Bodin oli kiinnostunut siitä, miten ympäristö vaikutti ihmiselämän yksityiskohtiin, kuten seksuaaliseen käytökseen, terveyteen, hulluuteen, ulkonäköön ja politiikkaan. Vaikka hän uskoikin, että ilmastolla oli suurenmoinen vaikutus, joka tuli ottaa huomioon valtiota perustettaessa, luonnolliset taipumukset eivät kuitenkaan kyenneet määrittämään

⁹⁰² Ibid, VI.1, 835.

⁹⁰³ Katso Berns, *Gouverner sans gouverner*, 13; Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*, 127.

⁹⁰⁴ Bodin, *De Republica libri sex*, VII, 631; katso Heinsohn and Steiger, "Inflation and Witchcraft," 49–50.

⁹⁰⁵ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, I.2, 10; katso Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 3–4; Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 24.

⁹⁰⁶ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, VI.1, 846; Foucault, "Il faut défendre la société", 228.

⁹⁰⁷ Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V.1, 666.

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid, V.1, 694.

ihmisten elämää perinpohjaisesti, vaan niitä oli mahdollista muokata asianmukaisen kurin avulla (esimerkiksi kasvatuksen ja ruumiillisen harjoittelun kautta).⁹⁰⁹ Bodinin ilmastoajattelu oli siis kaksinkertaisesti biopoliittista – ensinnäkin poliittisen järjestyksen tuli sopeutua sitä ympäröivään luontoon (mukaan lukien siellä asuvien ihmisten kirjaimellisiin ruumiinnesteisiin), ja toisaalta luonnon vaikutuksia voitiin sopeuttaa haluttuun suuntaan poliittisten väliintulojen eli oikean kurin avulla.

Seitsemännessä luvussa tarkastelin Euroopan kiivaimpien noitavainojen aikaan julkaistua demonologista teosta *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, joka käsittelee noitien ja demoneiden tunnistamista sekä eliminoimista.⁹¹⁰ Bodin uskoi, että Saatana halusi tuhota koko ihmiskunnan aiheuttamalla murhia ja abortteja, ja että valtion tulisi ehdottomasti estää paholaisen käytyreitä toteuttamasta tätä tavoitetta.⁹¹¹ Noitien rikokset olivat pääosin ruumiillisia – usein myös suoraan seksiin ja lisääntymiseen liittyviä (ja monesti biopoliittisesti latautuneita) – heidät oli siis joko parannettava tai tapettava, jotta heidän aiheuttamansa jatkuvasti leviävä poliittinen, mutta samalla myös koko ihmisyyttä itseään uhkaava, vaara saataisiin torjuttua.⁹¹² Koska tämän erityisen väestöosan eliminointi tarkoitti muun muassa syntyvyyden säännöstelyn, sairauksien, poliittisen uhan ja ihmiskunnan sukupuuton estämistä, lähestyimme jälleen foucault’laisen valtiorasismien ydintä sekä aivan erityislaatuista suvereenin vallan teknologiaan sekoittanutta biopoliittista hallintaa. Tässä valtiorasistisessa hallinnassa yhteisöön assimiloituneita, muita ihmisiä korruptoivia noitia haluttiin tuhota yhteisön edun ja koko ihmiskunnan selviytymisen nimissä.

Yhteenvedoa edeltävässä kahdeksannessa luvussa kokosin käsittelylukujen löydökset yhteen esittäkseni, että Bodinin ajattelu sisältää ilmeisen biopoliittisen juonteen. Tällä keskeisellä väitteellä pyrin paikkaamaan Bodin-tutkimuksessa usein sivuutettuja, modernia väestöpolitiikkaa enteileviä аспекteja ja tekemään uudenlaisia avauksia biopolitiikan tutkimuksen saralla. Keskityin erityisesti kahteen johdannossa esittämäni lisätutkimuskysymykseen, jotka koskivat biopolitiikan historiaa ja sen vaikeaselkoista suhdetta suvereenin vallan kanssa. 1) Biopolitiikan ja suvereenin vallan välinen suhde näyttää järjestyneen siten, että keskenään ristiriitaiset vallan teknologiat eivät voi toimia yhdessä omissa kompromissittomissa olomuodoissaan sortumatta samalla niiden kuolettavaan yhdistelmään eli valtiorasismiin. Ne voivat kuitenkin operoida samanaikaisesti eri tasoilla toistensa toimintaan puuttumatta, mutta toinen toistaan hyödyttäen (esimerkki: suvereeni valta vähentää rikollisuutta lakipykälien avustuksella, siinä missä kensorien hellävaraisempi hallinta puuttuu ihmisten elämään täysin eri tavalla – pelkällä katseella, turvautumatta lakiin, mutta vähentäen kuitenkin rikollisuutta entisestään). Tämän lisäksi biopolitiikka voi omaksua suvereenille valalle ominaisen lain muodon (modernit lait ovat usein erottamattomia normien

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁹¹⁰ Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*.

⁹¹¹ Ibid, II.4, 178–179.

⁹¹² Ibid, IV.5, 366–372; katso Heinsohn and Steiger, “Inflation and Witchcraft,” 41–42.

kautta tapahtuvasta regulaatiosta eli lain ulkopuolella vaikuttavista ja aikaisempaa syvemmälle tunkeutuvista hallinnan keinoista).⁹¹³ Keppiä ja porkkanaa tarjoavat roomalaistyylliset avioliittolait ovat mainio esimerkki biopoliittisista ja normeihin perustuvista laeista.

2) Bodinillä näyttää olevan merkittävä rooli Ojakankaan esittelemässä antiikin biopolitiikan pitkässä renessanssissa. Tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että biopoliittista ajattelua esiintyi ennen Foucault'n määrittelemää modernia "biopoliittista aikaa". Koska tämän työn johtopäätökset vahvistavat Ojakankaan argumentteja antiikin biopolitiikasta ja tarkentavat hänen alustavasti hahmottelemaansa kuvaa varhaismodernin ajan biopoliittisuudesta, voidaan tutkimustani pitää hänen projektinsa jatkumona. Kyseessä on kuitenkin samalla myös itsenäinen tutkimus ja ensimmäinen eksplisiittisesti tätä spesifiä biopolitiikan historian tutkimuksessa esiintyvää aukkoa tilkitsemään pyrkivä monografiamuotoinen tutkimus. Tulevaisuudessa biopolitiikan historian tutkimusta voidaan edistää tarkastelemalla myös muita renessanssiajan poliittisia ajattelijoita.

Työn loppuosassa spekuloin vielä, että biopolitiikan historiaa voidaan edelleenkin pitää nykyisyyden ja tulevaisuuden historiana (ainakin niin kauan kuin ilmastonmuutoksen ja koronaviruspandemian kaltaiset haasteet ymmärretään biopoliittisten kategorioiden valossa, ja niihin pyritään vastaamaan biopoliittisin keinoin). Foucault'laisen genealogian hengessä päädyin toteamaan, että yhä ajankohtaisen biopolitiikkakäsitteen laajempi tuntemus voi auttaa meitä ymmärtämään ympärillämme ilmeneviä elämän hallinnan tekniikoita ja väistämään niiden epätoivotuimpia manifestoitumisen muotoja kuten eugeniikkaa ja valtiorasismia, jotka saattavat nostaa päätään uudestaan esimerkiksi tekoälyn ja geenimuuntelun saralla tehtävien läpimurtojen myötä. Vaikka tulevat teknologiset ratkaisut voivat auttaa meitä myös ratkaisemaan monia nykyisistä biopoliittisista ongelmistamme, emme voi tietää kuinka manipuloidulla perimällä ja toimintakykyä moninkertaisesti kohentavilla implanteilla varustellut "yli-ihmiset" kohtelevat toistaiseksi parantelemattomia ihmiskunnan jäseniä. Biopolitiikan tutkimukselle lienee joka tapauksessa tilausta myös lähitulevaisuudessa.

⁹¹³ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I*, 177.

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