

**ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS**  
**PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THOUGHT MASTER'S DEGREE**  
**PROGRAM**

**THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE NOTION OF CRIME UNDER**  
**COVID-19**  
**AND THE NEW MODEL OF POWER**

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**İSTANBUL**  
**2022**

**The Transformation of the Notion of Crime under COVID-19  
and the New Model of Power  
Covid-19 Pandemisi Döneminde Değişen Suç Kavramı  
ve Yeni İktidar Modeli**

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İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi

**Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih :** 15.07.2022

**Toplam Sayfa Sayısı :** 76

**Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)**

- 1) COVID-19
- 2) Foucault
- 3) İktidar
- 4) Suç
- 5) Pandemi

**Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)**

- 1) COVID-19
- 2) Foucault
- 3) Power
- 4) Crime
- 5) Pandemic

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the workers who were dismissed with the virus that came out suddenly one day or to the workers who work day and night to avoid being fired, the children who were trapped at home, the teachers who taught a lesson on a black screen at the computer, the old people who were forgotten, those who were punished while looking for bread in the garbage, the health workers who were first called our heroes then have been beaten, and others...

To all the damned, who are stuck under the walls, crushed under those walls but whose voice is not heard, in this new life that accompanies that does not go away as days, months, even years pass...

I would like to thank my beautiful friends Sema, Ilhan, and Zeynep who supported me in the difficult times during the tight hours. They don't know how grateful I am to my mother Cemalinur, who wholeheartedly supports her daughter, who started school again despite her advancing age, and my dear sister Songül, who always encouraged me...

I would like to thank my professors Zeynep Talay Turner, Ömer B. Albayrak, and Kaan Atalay for their contributions to me. And I really would like to thank my advisor professor Ferda Keskin for his inspiring approach and valuable contributions.

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, the transformation of the concepts of crime and power under Covid-19 will be discussed. The objective is to look at the current pandemic experience on the basis of Foucault's analyses of the changes in and crossrelations between power relations at times of epidemics in order to understand how power relations are structured in this experience and how the notion of crime takes a new form.

During the discussion, the models of sovereignty, discipline and governmentality, which are the models of power described by Foucault, will be examined by thinking the current experience in terms of these models, and by questioning their similarities and differences. How the current model of power uses new tools, including changing technology, the possibilities these new tools provide to those in power, and the 'opportunities' offered by the Pandemic, which can also be described as a 'state of exception', will be evaluated. And the change in the definition of the concept of crime, which is perhaps at the center of all this, will be discussed.

Since this study is based on a current experience, it will be possible to consider current examples. Although the examples and the general attitudes of other countries will be considered, the practices in Turkey will mainly be focused on. Althoughh Foucault's thoughts are taken as the basis, the articles containing observations and analyses of the pandemic by thinkers around the world since the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic have been used in the context of the subject.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Foucault, power, crime, pandemic.

## ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Covid-19 pandemisi döneminde değişen suç ve iktidar kavramları tartışılacaktır. Foucault'nun salgın hastalık dönemlerinde iktidar ilişkilerindeki değişimler ve bazen de iç içe geçmelere dair düşünceleri incelenerek ve temel alınarak, güncel salgın deneyimine bakmak ve bu deneyim içerisinde iktidar ilişkilerinin nasıl yapılandırıldığını, bu yapılandırılma bağlamında suç kavramının uğradığı değişimi göstermek hedeflenmektedir.

Tartışma yürütülürken, Foucault'nun tarif ettiği iktidar modelleri olan hükümlerlik, disiplinci ve yönetimsellik modelleri ele alınıp bugün yaşanan deneyimin bu modellerle karşılaştırılması, benzerlikleri ve ayrılıkları incelenecektir. Güncel iktidar modelinin değişen teknolojiyi de içeren yeni araçları nasıl kullandığı, bu yeni araçların muktedirlere sağladığı olanaklar ile birlikte bir 'istisna hali' olarak da tariflenebilecek olan Pandeminin sunduğu 'fırsatlar' değerlendirilecek ve tüm bunların belki de merkezinde yer alan suç kavramının tanımındaki değişim ele alınacaktır.

Çalışma güncel bir deneyim üzerinden hareket ettiği için güncel örnekleri ele almak söz konusu olacaktır. Örnekler ele alınırken, diğer ülkelerin genel tutumları da ele alınmakla birlikte, ağırlıklı olarak Türkiye'deki uygulamalara yaslanılacaktır. Çalışma hazırlanırken temele Foucault'nun düşünceleri konmakla birlikte, Covid-19 Pandemisinin başlangıcından bu yana dünya genelinde düşünürlerin salgına ilişkin gözlemleri ve analizlerini içeren makalelerinden konu bağlamında faydalanılmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Covid-19, Foucault, iktidar, suç, pandemi.

## INTRODUCTION

According to some, we are living in unfortunate times; according to others, we are at one of the turning points in history and according to some others, these days will pass, and everything will go back to normal (what is meant by normal is probably the pre-pandemic period). We don't know who is telling the truth or if there is someone who is telling the truth and who hasn't been heard yet. We will see it together in time. But there is something that is seen clearly: something is happening, something takes on a different form. Although it is not possible to pinpoint the beginning, there is an ongoing process and we are just trying to understand it. In this process, we continue to encounter definitions, expressions and concepts that have just emerged or have already emerged but that change meaning.

Examining a concept inevitably requires following the process of emergence of that concept, dealing with historical, social, and political variables, taking a look at the concepts that affect it or are affected by it, and examining how it takes on a new form today. This study partly will try to do this while focusing on the transformation of the notions of crime and power. However, since what will be discussed is the transformation of the concepts of crime and power at a given time - within the pandemic disease process that we are currently experiencing - this system of examination will be partly followed and further efforts will be made to understand the new form that is taking shape.

Foucault, with the examples he gives, says that by analyzing how those who hold political power follow a path during periods of epidemics, the model of power specific to that period or prominent at that time can be described. This relation that he has revealed may also be valid to the period of the pandemic we are going through these days.

In addition to the models of sovereignty, discipline, and governmentality that Foucault described through examples of epidemics such as leprosy, plague, and smallpox as well as through examples of urbanization and grain shortages, can it be argued that a new model of power is being built around the case of the Covid-19



pandemic? If not, should it be thought that what is trying to gain a place in practice is not a new model, but a partial model that is on the way of being created on the basis of some of the old models' methods?

Considering that each power model offers a framework with its own definition of crime, what kind of framework does Covid-19 offer to the concepts of crime and criminal? Moreover, while this model of power is taking shape, with the widening of the borders of surveillance as a result of technology and the digital world reaching a speed far beyond what Foucault could have experienced, has the possibility of our "involvement in crime" and thus our being closed in many easier ways increased? When talking about crime, is there a difference between what was understood today and what has been understood hundreds of years ago? And if so, what is the difference? So, does the Covid-19 outbreak have a close relationship with all these questions or are we just facing a historical intersection?

We can formulate some of the questions that will be considered and discussed in this way. However, every question inevitably raises further questions. For this reason, the questions related to crime and power in the period of pandemic we live in will be taken as a basis and we try to follow this lead.

Although each of them has its own characteristics, viruses generally aim to reproduce in the body they enter and exhibit a systematic behavior pattern (Akça, Alkan, Özkul, Dağalp, Karaoğlu, Oğuzoğlu, 2020). We experience that the virus and the pandemic are not metaphors, but quite real and even deadly. However, it would not be strange to say that this virus-specific behavior follows a similar path in ways of thinking: Infiltrating thought and multiplying there, capturing and ultimately changing that thought so much that there is nothing left of its older form, that is, destroying it. Who knows, maybe Foucault too was thinking this when he gave examples of epidemics for explaining models of power. We don't know. But it would not be an exaggeration to say that the society we live in, and even further, the whole world, is going through a process of intellectual change with the Covid-19 pandemic.

The concepts of power and crime have been specially chosen as a means of understanding the change caused and accelerated by the pandemic. Because the way to understand a society and its functioning, life, and ways of thinking in that society is to understand the power relations that are at play there. For power to establish and maintain its existence, it always needs an other, an outsider, a criminal. After all, it is power itself that introduces the concept of crime and associates certain types of behavior with this concept and produces criminals.

In chapter 1, the definitions of the concept of crime according to the models of power defined by Foucault have been tried to be explained. It has been tried to show that each power model has its own definition of crime and criminal, and also there is no certain definition of crime.

In chapters 2 and 3, it has been tried to show how some people were blamed for every natural disaster or epidemic in history and how these people were excluded from society. It has been preferred to call them metaphorically “the cursed”. In addition, the reactions of those who were excluded or abandoned during the current pandemic were tried to be explained with current examples.

In chapter 4, the history of the Covid-19 Pandemic has been briefly explained. Also, it has been tried to explain the relationship between the current pandemic and the concept of crime and power.

In chapter 5, the relationship between the people who are considered criminals and power has been tried to be explained in accordance with the crime concept defined in each model of power.

To sum up, the notion of crime and the model of power, which are thought to have changed in the current pandemic period, were tried to be examined based on the relationship between models of power and their definitions of crime and pandemic disease.

## CHAPTER 1

### EACH POWER HAS ITS OWN CRIMINAL

It is possible to say that power needs a criminal who threatens its existence; hence each power creates its own criminal. According to Foucault (Foucault, 2007, p.69), laws enacted in the model of sovereignty announce what is prohibited, that is, what cannot be done. The disciplinarian model works more with commands and tells what should be done. When we come to the model of governmentality, we see that the security mechanisms come into play, and through these mechanisms, this model actually regulates reality and governs through the data provided by statistics although it uses prohibition and imperatives if need be. That is, in the model of sovereignty, those who do not obey the prohibitions are criminals, while, in the disciplinary model, those who ignore and do not follow the orders are criminals. In the governmental model, those who refuse to be included in the statistics or do not want to be in the 'population' are counted as criminals.

When we say 'crime' and 'criminal,' although both terms have been given different definitions throughout history, what is meant is behavior outside the patterns determined by social norms and people who perform these behaviors. People who oppose or remain outside the social consensus are criminals. As Foucault states, crime is not a natural thing, social interests determine what should be a crime (Foucault, 1995, p.104). Therefore, each model of power has its own definition of crime and its own criminal.

#### 1.1. THE MODEL OF SOVEREIGNTY AND CRIME

In the first pages of *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Foucault, 1995), we encounter a very realistic version of a punishment scene that has been turned into a spectacle, perhaps better described than in many literary works. Foucault describes the scene in such a way that the reader identifies with Robert-François

Damiens, whose flesh is being torn apart at that very moment. The criminal who is punished in a torture scene that many can describe as brutality –although he is also a suspect in a failed assassination- is a regicide. And he is tortured and killed with the method of punishment that the law provides for the king-killers, that is, by dismembering his body. It is not without reason that Foucault started his book with this scene and expressed it with such a vivid narrative. The stage contains the meaning attributed to the concepts of power and crime/criminal of the period, including the legislators and enforcers, the people who are tortured and the audience. A presentation or discussion of the analysis of the models of power, which we see more clearly and expressly in the lectures that Foucault will give at the Collège de France in 1977-1978 under the title *Security, Territory, Population* (Foucault, 2007), is made in *The Birth of the Prison*.

There is no light or severe form of breaking the law, or rather not recognizing the prohibitions. Every crime committed in the model of sovereignty was committed against the sovereign. So every criminal is essentially a king-killer. The punishment to be given should be at this rate. It is seen that the punishments given in this period were focused on inflicting bodily pain. Torture applied to a person who is included in the criminal category with his behavior is not unlawful brutality that emerges out of anger, but rather a technique and "a whole economy of power is invested" in it (Foucault, 1995, p.35). From the interrogation to the end of the execution, all stages are studiously followed, and the crime reproduces itself while power is renewed. What goes on between the judge who initiated the interrogation and the one who was interrogated and tortured has not much to do with establishing justice. It is here that power is showing itself and doing it exaggeratedly and ceremonially. During the whole process, the criminal will confess his crime first in front of the judges and then in front of the whole public on the stage, cry, beg, ask for forgiveness, be exposed to the humiliation of the audience, and die in pain. Or he will rebel against the judges -essentially against the sovereign- he will curse, brag about his crime instead of confessing. In other words, there is a kind of war of wills or, in Foucault's words, a "duel" (Foucault, 1995, p.41). A power game is played over the body of the tortured person.

The fact that the target of the crime is the sovereign also gives the sovereign freedom of action. Although what will be done to the criminal is determined by the laws (which are also set by the sovereign), the sovereign or king also has the right to ignore these laws, not to apply them, and to forgive the criminal. The concept of right is used here in the sense of a kind of natural right. Because it can be said that the sovereign did not acquire this right as a result of some efforts afterward, but possessed it due to its existence, and even usurped it. It is this right that gives him the power to decide who should die. Therefore, the sovereign does not only dominate the community under his rule but also, in a way, the phenomenon of dying. Or, more accurately, he has the power to kill, he is even the only one with that power. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, emphasizing this situation, Foucault says: “The sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of requiring. The right which was formulated as the “power of life and death” was in reality the right to take life or let live” (Foucault, 1978, p.136). Therefore, the executioner who kills the criminal is only a hand that executes the decision made by the sovereign with the power he gets from this authority. As a matter of fact, if the sovereign wishes, he can stop this hand (the executioner), forgive the criminal, and prevent his death, and only he can do this.

The act of killing the criminal by torture was carried out in an area where people could see and watch easily to ensure that the audience not only witnessed but also participated in the execution. Of course, the audience did not physically hold the pliers with their own hands and tear off the flesh of the criminal, but clapping the executioner, insulting shouts, getting more excited as the criminal screamed and throwing stones or other things at him meant their actual participation in this murder. Moreover, by participating in the death penalty given to the king, that is, to this person who had the power, the audience, that is, the public too participated in the king's revenge. Thus, the crime committed against the power symbolized in the sovereign (every crime was potentially in this context) was considered to be committed against the existence of the society, and the society avenged and

punished. Foucault also states that sometimes this situation is reversed, and roles were changed in these ceremonial executions, and criminals were declared heroes and sovereigns are ridiculed (Foucault, 1995, p. 67). Here, again, it is not the person of the sovereign who is ridiculed and humiliated, but power itself, that is, the law. The execution scene, which returns to a fairground, is turned upside down, and this time, those who fall to the ground become, in a sense, the accused and the judges.

Agamben's *Homo Sacer* (Agamben, 2017) brings to mind the fact that the sovereign, who has the power to execute the law, becomes a kind of victim who can not be sacrificed by those who make fun of this law. By making the law, the sovereign, who positions himself outside of this law and within the society that is expected to be subject to the law, encounters the result of this illegal (or above the law) position and becomes 'homo sacer'. While he reserved the right to kill those who were subject to the laws he had set, his existence was not taken seriously and feared by them. It is possible to see this as a counter-revenge. It was always the case that criminals or those who did not comply with the prohibitions were selected from among the poor, unemployed, vagrants, and even the lunatics, and committing crimes was thought to be specific to the public, thus taking revenge on the entire people with execution scenes, punishing, torturing and killing, and thus reproducing power. However, we can say that the people, in a way, returned the blame to the people in power, and defined the laws and prohibitions as criminals, with what we can call -although the statement is debatable- a counter-revenge.

It is possible to argue that this creates a sharing situation while blaming one side or the other. Just as the sovereign, while punishing the criminal, makes all the people supporters and allows them to take revenge with himself, the people share the crime and then the punishment with the sovereign with a counter-revenge action. However, if we consider that the lawmaker determines this whole mechanism, the judgment of the sovereign is met on a concrete basis – death – while the behavior of the people appears in an abstract form – ridicule, humiliation-. Therefore, it does not seem possible to talk about an equal share.

## **1.2. THE MODEL OF DISCIPLINE AND CRIME**

Foucault defines the mechanism of discipline as another model of power (Foucault, 2007, p. 20). The criminal, which exists in the model of sovereignty but has not been conceptualized, is produced within this mechanism. Now, the tracking, surveillance, correction, and transformation of the criminal are on the agenda. The model of sovereignty (lawful-legal system), which lasted from the Middle Ages to the 17th-18th centuries, is replaced by the disciplinarian system from the 18th century onwards. As Foucault has warned many times, these models of power are not separated from each other by sharp lines of demarcation and by certain dates. It is observed from time to time that they intertwine or use borrow techniques from each other. The main thing is which system came to the fore in which period and which techniques were used (Foucault, 2007, p. 22). Since the 18th century, we see that a mechanism that uses disciplinary surveillance and control-centered confinement has been dominant.

The model of discipline in the prison is built on the existence of cells. Here we use cells both in the metaphorical and in the literal sense. During this period, which we can also call the period of confinement, criminals, the poor, the lunatic, the unemployed, those who are outside the designated limits of sexual behavior, and all people who are thought to disrupt or could disrupt the social order (in a sense, the “others”) were closed. The discrimination that Foucault says was applied to lepers in the Middle Ages (Foucault, 2006, p. 52), has now turned into a kind of separation and isolation with this confinement. This separation can be in the form of placing people in charities and closing them in cells, as well as locking them up in hospitals and prisons. The new technique aimed to separate people from each other by dividing them into cells, to keep these cells under control and to monitor their behavior, and to ensure the moral transformation of these people (criminals, the insane, the sick, the poor, etc.) and their contribution to the economy. Thus, what the reformers of the 18th century said, namely, the idea of punishing instead of taking revenge was on the table (Foucault, 1995, p. 74).

In the model of disciplinary power, the methods of applying violence to the body, inflicting pain, and physical torture, which was seen in the Middle Ages, were gradually replaced by the techniques of controlling the body, regulating its behavior, and making it obedient. While applying these techniques, there is an effort to stay away from violence. However, the point that Foucault especially draws attention to is that what was criticized and wanted to be changed was the bad power economy being carried out rather than this brutal violence, so the issue could be formulated as better punishment, not less punishment (Foucault, 1995, p. 81).

It is obvious that confinement, as a power technique, has appeared on the stage as a dominant actor in some periods of history and is even still being practiced today. It is known that this can occur in the form of being put in a cell behind closed doors as well as in places created as open-air camps. As a matter of fact, with the concentration camps in World War II and the migration movement that has accelerated for many reasons in recent years – especially the wars that have entered into an almost endless circle with the desire of the politicians to spread their power, which is not satisfied in any way – the “Repatriation Centers” were built in almost every geography. And these “Centers” can be cited as examples of spaces of confinement created in the open air. The confinement behind closed doors, on the other hand, continues to exist with prisons, which have become an indispensable punishment tool of the states after they have emerged and assumed a kind of corporate identity. Moreover, the prison technique spread to all areas by modeling schools, military barracks, hospitals, and factories after itself. (Foucault, 1995, p. 228). However, we live in an era quite different from the era when power used confinement as the most important technique in re-establishing itself. But, unfortunately, it cannot be said that is more humane.

In the model of power centered around discipline, the behaviors that are requested are revealed and those who do not adopt them are considered criminals. Individuals are thus constituted with the technique of confinement, which is used as a way of making criminals obedient and disciplined. Foucault states that the success of this power depends on the use of simple tools. These are hierarchical observation,



normalizing judgement and the combination of the two under the form of examination (Foucault, 1995, p. 170).

In hierarchical observation, the aim is to transform people into physically healthy individuals, experts in their fields, in military obedience and in conformity to general morality, by dividing them in cells and keeping them under uninterrupted surveillance. By establishing a sub-penalty system, these people are compared with each other, a hierarchy is created between them, they are differentiated, divided into types or combined and excluded. They are thus normalized. This model combines surveillance and normalization through examination (Foucault, 1995, p. 170-192). Thus, disciplinary power produces the individual it needs.

Bentham's Panopticon, which Foucault shows as the architectural form of this power model (Foucault, 1995, p. 200), helps us visualize the embodied form of this system. In *Panopticon*, which consists of letters he wrote to a friend in 1787, Bentham mentions the importance of convincing those held inside that they are being watched at any moment with a kind of surveillance structure that he describes down to the smallest detail (Bentham and others, 2019). The structure in which incarceration, imprisonment, forced labor, education is possible is a prison for criminals, but it also is a scheme applicable to a school, a production house or even a hospital. Here, it is possible to “punish the incorrigible, rehabilitate the immoral, control the insane, imprison the suspects, employ the lazy, care for the helpless, treat the sick, direct the volunteers, or educate the new generation in the field of education” (Bentham, 2019, Letter I). According to Foucault, the Panopticon is the general principle of political anatomy whose object and purpose are disciplinary relations, which allows everyone who is being watched on to also watch on the overseer (Foucault, 1995, p. 208).

### **1.3. THE MODEL OF GOVERNMENTALITY AND CRIME**

While Foucault gives roughly the general characteristics of the models of power he put forward in terms of relations, he considers power as a set of technologies, not

as an institutional structure. As a matter of fact, by approaching the model of sovereignty or the disciplinary model from this perspective, he expresses what techniques were used at that time and the possible purposes of using them. While the first (sovereignty) model creates a structure using the method of exclusion and discrimination, the second (discipline) aims to include and isolate in a given space and discipline those who are included. While the object of sovereignty is the legal citizen, the object of the disciplinary model is the body. While the first acts on law and prohibition and therefore uses a negative discourse, the second starts by commanding, telling what should be done, that is, it uses a positive discourse and applies politics to the body. However, the historical transformation of capitalism, which has witnessed various movements, puts a new – or redefined – object which is not a singular person or a species but the population. While the first model is defined as the state of justice, the second is expressed as the administrative state, and the third model that has emerged with its new object is a state of government (Foucault, 2007. p. 144).

In the model of power, which Foucault calls ‘governmentality’ and which focuses mainly on the population, political economy is used as a form of knowledge and these are used to create a society controlled by security mechanisms (Keskin, 2016, p. 73). The techniques of the other two models (sovereignty and discipline) are used in the model of governmentality, but the purposes of their use have changed. Contrary to the forbidding stance of the law and the commanding stance of the discipline, a technique that "leaves people to do" is now used with security mechanisms, that is, with their "dispositifs" (Keskin, 2016, p. 74). Foucault emphasizes three points while explaining what he means by governmentality: Firstly, (as stated earlier) a whole where the main target is the population, the dominant form of knowledge is political economy, and the technical tool is security mechanisms. Second, a line of power that brings about the development of a set of governmental apparatuses and a certain type of knowledge. Thirdly, the process of transformation from the state of justice to the administrative state evolves into the governmental state (Foucault, 2007, p. 144).

In the model of governmentality, the primary purpose is to take reality under record. And this is done with the science of statistics which etymologically means ‘science of state’. This information includes the power and resources of the state. Since the main target here is the population, the more comprehensive information about the population is collected and recorded, the closer the government approaches its goal. Information about the population covers a wide range of pools including death and birth rates, labor force capacity, age distribution, urban and rural longevity, educational status, marriage and divorce rates, and many other data. In addition, the natural wealth of a state such as forests, mines, water resources, which are being processed and have not been processed, and the status of trade are recorded as statistical data (Foucault, 2007, p.354). It is possible to say that a kind of reality map is drawn through these data. Through this map, the state can master reality and have the power to change it. The state, instead of restricting or ordering people, has the opportunity to control them under the guise of granting freedom, by allowing them to do and move, and to direct them to the ways, jobs, and initiatives they think they take voluntarily. In other words, the state, in a way, governs reality through statistics.

With the use of new techniques, it is possible to say that those who are not, cannot, or do not want to take part in the governed population are criminals of the governmentality model. Because not taking part in the population on which targets have been set by the government that has made all the calculations and predicted most of the possibilities, has taken the measures to obtain the results in the most profitable way, and has created favourable conditions, disrupts the order of the system. Foucault says that the concept of the people can be used in relation to this issue and makes a contrast between the “population” and the “people” (Foucault, 2007, p. 67). It is through this opposition of the people that the system structured through the regulation of the population is disrupted. Therefore, this mass of people whose existence is undesirable can be called ‘the criminals’ of the period. Here, crime means not showing the predicted behavior, not making the preferences, not providing enough efficiency, going out of the redesigned reality, that is, not being included in the system. Previously, those who do not obey the prohibitions and do

not follow the commandments were criminals, while those who can no longer be calculated are criminals.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CURSED FROM YESTERDAY TO TODAY

Curse is a concept that evokes a bit of mythology. We continue to use it without knowing or ignoring its mythological background from ancient times to the present. In Ancient Greece natural disasters, famines, or epidemics were considered the curse of the Gods, and there was a tendency to consider this curse as a punishment for a crime (Vernant, 2017b, p.70). Although the gods were often involved in the conflicts and arguments of their own world and were not very interested in what people were doing, there were crimes they could not forgive. When these crimes were committed, the criminals were to be punished; otherwise, the whole society, not only the person who committed the crime, would be cursed. This curse often appeared in the form of epidemics and led to deaths. The tendency of some people to see the cause of the Covid-19 Pandemic we live in today as a curse or punishment from God due to the sinful and corrupt life of societies (Hatipoğlu, 2020) may be a perspective that takes its roots from the ancient period as well as from monotheistic religions. Practices such as excluding, punishing, shutting down, and blaming those who are sick, just like thin Ancient time, are perhaps the result of this perspective.

Murder has been recognized at almost every period of history as the most cursed, the greatest crime. The magnitude of this crime stems from the fact that it contains treachery against the divine, and that its effect is not limited to the deceased or the family of the deceased, but in a way affects the whole society. As we can see from the tragedies (Sophocles, 2019) and the interpretations of the written texts that have survived to the present day (Vernant, 2017a), in Ancient Greece, there were two great crimes that the Gods would not forgive: domestic bloodshed and insult against the gods. These two crimes can be said to be related to each other. After all, parenting, especially the paternal position, is a position close to the position of Godhood. For this reason, the crime of those who insult the gods and the murderers of their parents is transmitted to the whole society and they must be punished by

the whole society. Because if they were not punished, the crime that was transmitted to society would remain as a kind of curse.

Vernant says that the reason for the social pressure after the murder is not the desire to take revenge, but the emergence of a need for cleansing. Because along with the spilled blood, not only the murderer and his family but also the whole society has been contaminated and stained (Vernant, 2017b, p. 70). Getting rid of the wrath of the Gods by getting rid of this stain can be possible either by shedding blood and killing the murderer or by expelling him from that society and sending him into exile. This fear of contamination (*miasma*) led mainly to a new murder. It may seem like a paradox that the consequences of murder are eliminated by murder again. However, the power of a society's will to purify and get rid of these troubles, which is believed to be caused by famines, epidemics, and endless wars or conflicts, caused by unpunished crimes, and thus by an ongoing *miasma*, is not a power to be taken seriously.

The fear of contamination was so strong in ancient Greeks that they needed purification when a child was born, when a woman gave birth, sometimes before the sacrificing ceremony to the gods, on the birthday of some dead, and most often in the case of murder. Because, according to them, “contamination can be transmitted to people, families, city-states, holy places, even gods” (Vernant, 2017a, p.147). For this reason, they would either punish those they thought guilty or considered guilty with death or send them out of the city. With this action, they aimed to remove the *miasma* and the curse that had contaminated the city. And they would ask the soothsayers to arrange rituals to remove the curse (Vernant, 2017b, p.71).

The source of the curse may not always be a crime and a criminal. A stranger who came to the city, people who got sick and were thought to spread this disease, the disabled could also be the source of *miasma*. With the purifying rituals, the aim was to return the society to its healthy, non-violent, abundant days, and peace and harmony were restored. In ancient Greece, rituals that should be performed jointly by the society are also encountered in the experience of disasters by the society such

as epidemics or famines. It was hoped that the society would be purified from evil by putting the responsibility of the disaster onto an ugly or disabled person, killing that person by stoning or burning, and throwing his ashes into the sea or soil (Sina, 2015, p.53). In other words, the person who was accused and cursed did not always have to commit a crime; many reasons, such as being sick, being different, being a stranger, not being able to adapt to society, could have caused the person in question to be cursed and blamed.

The idea that order can be restored by seeking a scapegoat in social upheavals and punishing him is not a practice unique only to Ancient Greece. It is a form of thought and action that continued even after monotheistic religions emerged. One of the concrete examples of this is that in the medieval period women –mostly healers– were accused of witchcraft and there was the idea that evil was eliminated by burning and that order was restored (Aksan, 2013). The cremation of persons accused of witchcraft (most of whom were women) was also ceremonially carried out in a mass demonstration in the city squares. The ongoing punishment and mostly burning -based on religion and believed to be by the will of God- of these people, who broke the order established by power, were against it and were considered to be the source of evil, turned into a ritual which was not only the decision of the court but of the whole society. The source of the curse was no longer the wrath of God, but the Devil who rebelled against God, and the witches became, in a sense, the possessors of Devil or its representatives. Again, in this period, disabled people and some patients were accused of and punished for being a witch or possessed by the Devil, thus being the representative of evil (Aksan, 2013).

Being stigmatized because of appearance can take different forms in different societies. While bodily disability is a reason for exclusion, blame, and punishment in some societies, in some societies the color of the skin or religious belief may be sufficient to accuse a person. Because of the color of their skin Africans have been seen as a problem for people living in other continents -perhaps in every period of history- and this has led to serious consequences. Although it is said that our era is now the age of democracy and freedoms, a black-skinned person among white-

skinned people still continues to be an element of uneasiness. Especially when there is a crime and if there is a black-skinned person among the suspects, the eyes will inevitably be first set on him.

In every period, there has been people who had their share of being cursed, excluded, and blamed, and these people have always been considered the source of evil. Especially when it comes to epidemics that have driven societies to a breaking point, in a historical and cultural context, someone has always been blamed and scapegoated (Artvinli, 2020, p.47). At some point, almost everyone different starts to be excluded, blamed or even punished. Anyone with a different physical appearance, religious belief, political ideas, lifestyle, etc., which is thought to threaten the social system defined as order, is now turned into a stranger and accused. Sometimes it can be a murder suspect, sometimes it can only be a person whose back is bent from old age. Or someone who wants to be with someone of the same sex in societies where homosexuality is prohibited. According to Aykutalp, the figure of the stranger, who has an external place in society, is a bad, dangerous, weak, or a social phenomenon that should be avoided in social life. The stranger is also a figure who is unhealthy, stained, crippled, etc. (Aykutalp, 2021).

Stoning a stranger – by excluding, exiling, punishing – emerges in different forms during epidemics, and it is a behavior pattern that appears in every society and every age. In ancient times, this stranger could be a newcomer to the city or a murderer. While in the Middle Ages it could be a healer woman or someone who goes against the church, a worker who went on strike against the landlords to get compensation for his labor during the industrial revolution, today a refugee fleeing the war can be one. The curse is always on the stranger. However, the stranger is not always the outsider who comes from outside the society and tries to join that society, but sometimes it can also be an insider who comes out of that society. And that stranger or foreigner must somehow be punished just like Pierre Rivière.

In *A Case of Parricide in The 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Foucault, 1982), Michel Foucault provides the anatomy of the murder Pierre Rivière committed in all its aspects by dealing with legal proceedings, testimonies, and his memoir. According to this



anatomy, Rivière had become a stranger to the village, city, and country in which he was born and raised. Whatever the reasons, Rivière must be punished for the murder of his mother, sister, and brother. Rivière, who was an ordinary, even obscure person until that day, became the favorite stranger of his society. The opinions of those who testify about him are that he is a really weird person, he has been torturing animals and other children since childhood, he tends towards violence, he stays away from women and is even afraid of them, he does not make friends with anyone, and that they do not know him very well. In his memoirs, Rivière clearly explains the reasons for his behavior, which was described as weird. Unfortunately, these reasons will not save him from execution, and he already knows this and admits that he acted with this consciousness. If Pierre Rivière had not committed these murders, would the witnesses still think that way or would he continue to live as an ordinary person living in that village? Probably, he would continue to live as an inconspicuous peasant. But Rivière did commit a crime, in fact, he committed the greatest crime, becoming a murderer of his parents. Thus, he suddenly became the outsider/stranger/other and was cursed by society. Everyone started to think what a bad person he was. His punishment was necessary for the comfort of the whole society and the restoration of order, and it was done. Rivière—that is, the accursed person—is killed, and the social mechanism is restored.

The example of Pierre Rivière is striking in showing that the stranger does not always come from outside. But there is a possibility that everyone from the outside can become a Rivière and be cursed. Moreover, there is no need for him/her to murder for this curse. Sometimes he/she doesn't even need to do anything. He/she is always the first to be blamed when there is a theft, a murder, or an illness where he/she lives. The attacks, which started with a fight between Turkish and Syrian people in Ankara and the death of a Turkish person after this fight, were directed against all Syrians living there. Regardless of whether they were involved in the fight or not, the homes and workplaces of all Syrians were plundered, and they were forced to leave their homes, hide and move to other places (Euronews, 2021). The curse of being an outsider/stranger/other spread to all Syrians and associated them with the crime.

Thousands of years have passed since the days when the tragedies, which were thought to curse the entire city, spread among the people, and the dead body of Polyneices was denied proper burial in *Antigone* (Sophocles, 2019). Neither are we in the age of Damians who was tortured to death for attempting to take the life of the king, and of Rivière, who was tried and killed for parental murder. Now is the time at which even the concern that the dispossessed revolts might disrupt the political system is invisible. Nevertheless, the fear of contamination and damnation by strangers produced inside and outside continues to exist. By quoting from Artvin, we can say that epidemics are known to be a very important factor in the spread of xenophobia (Artvinli, 2020, p.46).

The Covid-19 Pandemic has caused the spread of xenophobia in different countries. While discrimination against Asian Americans has increased in the USA, the number of people going to Chinese restaurants has decreased and Asian American children have been subjected to racist expressions in schools. On the other hand, migrant workers in rural areas were not taken to quarantined cities in China to reduce the spread of the epidemic, and these workers were fired from their homes and factories (Nail, 2020).

With the Covid-19 Pandemic, which emerged when the era of epidemics was thought to be over, new crimes, new criminals, and new curses were derived. By adding new ones to the accursed brought from the past, they were targeted and accused in the epidemic of the new age: the elderly, children, those with chronic diseases, refugees, workers, LGBTI+s, those who do not wear masks, those who are not vaccinated, those who go out at night, those who do not obey and anyone who does not recognize or who questions the rules have become the new cursed.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE OUTSIDERS

The new epidemic of the new age has brought the new accursed with it. They, i.e., the elderly, women, children, LGBTI+ people, refugees, patients, and others, have now become the cause of the disaster or the reasons for its continuation.

Authorities always have their favorite people: People who do not resist when they are forbidden, immediately obey when they are commanded, or voluntarily (!) demand to be ruled by power and never leave that area in which they are ruled. Other than them, there are the outsiders. And it is possible to divide the outsiders into two. The first are those expected to be subject to power and those that power does not see and does not want to see. In the Covid-19 pandemic, these people include workers who have to work, those who are unemployed, the elderly and children who are prohibited from going out and others. People whose existence, needs and desires are ignored, but who are expected to obey every rule. Those in the second part can be expressed as those who do not recognize the prohibitions, ignore commandments, and cannot be controlled. Or, by another definition, those who make noise on the street (Uysal, 2020), (Özkan, 2021) or those who give a concert in the park (Gazete Duvar, 2021).

By referring to Agamben, it is possible to see the current Covid-19 Pandemic as a state of exception. Because Agamben defines the state of exception as the suspension of law (Agamben, 2018, p.13). However, he states that law is not canceled but only suspended, so this state continues to be related to the law (Agamben, 2018, p.35). Agamben quotes Schmitt to argue that despite the absence of a 'legal' order in the state of exception, there still exists an order. In connection with this, Agamben claims in *Homo Sacer* that the relationship of exception is a relationship of prohibition. He says that the banned person is not someone who is thrown out of the law by being cut off from it, but is the person who is *abandoned*, that is, the person left to the threshold where law and life, the outside and the inside,

cannot be distinguished from each other (Agamben, 2017, p.41). So, when Agamben expresses that the exception is a kind of exclusion (Agamben, 2017, p.28), we must understand the person who is abandoned, who cannot benefit from what the law provides, who is forbidden to benefit from it, but who is still somehow included in and blocked by the law.

The description of Agamben as "the person who is abandoned to the threshold " is found in Saramago's novel, *Death With Interruptions (As intermitências da morte)* written in the same years. Saramago's novel tells the story of what happened in a city where death has disappeared for an unknown reason. The people, who are quite pleased with this situation at first, see that the absence of death causes problems after a while, and they start to take the old and sick people to the border of the city and abandon them. In this way, they do not kill them, but they not only exclude them from the community but also let them die. In this case, the enforcers of the prevailing law are not only killing without committing murder but also abandoning these people by leaving them in the area where the law can be suspended and forbidding them to come back to the city. These people are neither inside nor outside, neither subject to the law nor exempt from it. Considering that scientists, philosophers, artists, and writers living in the same period were affected by similar conditions, it is not surprising that similar reflections were observed in the works they produced. In a way, it is possible to see traces of both Agamben's *Homo Sacer* and the *State of Exception* in Saramago's words. Or the early reflections of the outsiders who were abandoned by the Covid-19 Pandemic by being excluded from the law.

### **3.1.THE ABANDONED**

When the Covid-19 Pandemic emerged in a city in China and started to spread rapidly to almost the whole world, measures, bans, rules, and restrictions began to be discussed in every country. However, each state has taken a different approach. Despite these differences, a parallel set of rules can be pointed out. In general, the

presence of those who practice strict control mechanisms and those who are in a relatively looser posture is noticeable.

With the pandemic, some rules and regulations –some of which are constitutional, and some are not- have been determined in countries that have been put in place as strict control mechanisms. Curfews were the most conspicuous of them. It is prohibited to go out at certain times of the day (BBC NEWS, October 26, 2020). However, separate regulations have been introduced for those who are exempt from bans and – as we have seen in the example of Turkey – for those who cannot go out even during non-prohibited hours. Those exempted from curfews were generally workers (Öztürk, 2020). The production sector has not been stopped in most of the world. There has been a period when laws were suspended and a state of emergency was declared in certain countries (*Dünya*, 2020), (*Evrensel*, 2021), regulations were made with circulars and decrees (TC Ministry of Interior, 2020). While the pandemic affected all people, the measures brought by these circulars did not cover some people. Worried about the deterioration of the economy or the worsening of the already bad economy, the states - and of course the capital owners - were not in favor of cessation of production. In this case, workers in the production field were the first ones whose health could be put at risk. At some point, all factories literally began to look like prisons –as if justifying Foucault. After the Covid-19 virus was detected in some workers in a factory in Turkey, the entire factory was quarantined, allowing the workers to work during the day and continue production, and to stay in the dormitories of the factory at night (Gazete Duvar, July 27, 2020). The quarantine measure, which was implemented to prevent the spread of the virus and to treat the sick, turned the factory into prison and became the new tool for the factory owner to profit from this situation. During the pandemic, workers were forced to comply with many rules – such as wearing masks, following social distance, and in some cases not going out – but they were deprived of their physical needs such as staying healthy, getting treatment if sick, being with their family, resting and other physical needs. This situation showed a similar image for the workers working in the construction sector, and they were almost sentenced to a life of imprisonment in the construction site in which they worked. Ignoring the

crucial progress of the pandemic, which was increasing day by day, the constructions continued to rise. Therefore, the majority of workers were both subjected to the law and did not benefited from what the law allowed. In other words, they were neither inside nor outside the system.

We can say that a similar situation appears in private sector employees. While the measures and bans brought under the conditions of pandemic were valid for those working in public institutions, employees in private institutions continued to work without taking any precautions, as if there was no epidemic disease. Even if measures were shown to be taken in workplaces where there were workers at tables or machines next to each other, they could not be implemented, and these ostensible measures were only applied as a means of escaping from fines.

Another large group of those excluded is the elderly and children, through the example of Turkey. The example of Turkey with the curfew imposed on the elderly and children is striking in terms of being unique in the whole world. 10 days after the official announcement of the first Covid-19 case (Euronews, March 11, 2020), people over the age of 65 were banned from going out (TR Ministry of Interior Affairs, 21 March 2020). About 10 days after this ban, children under the age of 20 were banned from going out (TR Ministry of Interior Affairs, April 3, 2020). However, considering that this situation would lead to loss of workforce, in other words, again due to economic concerns, the age limit was updated to 18. These bans were enforced for more than a year, with a few occasional hours off per week.

The justification for the curfew imposed on the elderly was to protect them from the disease. It has been suggested that children may have difficulty in complying with the measures and may spread the virus without realizing it, as they are more likely to survive the disease without symptoms. The general purpose of this ban was to reduce the spread of the epidemic and protect people from the disease, which at first seemed convincing to the public. However, the fact that months have passed and the ban was still in place, and that neither the World Health Organization nor any other country had mentioned such a measure, has led people to doubt and anxiety. However, the majority began to feel uncomfortable and sometimes warned

when they saw an old person or child on the street. It also happened that the warnings sometimes turned into verbal violence. The elderly were no longer the people to be protected, they were almost seen as the source of the disease, and they faced reaction when they went out into the street. It was as if being over 65 was a curse, they were stigmatized. Having been declared the new scapegoat, they quietly closed themselves up in their homes.

The elders were bound by prohibitions but free from the law. They had become a group that the state locked at home and forgot. As Yasin argues, the importance of physical, mental, and emotional well-being in increasing the resistance against the epidemic is important for all ages, but it is more important for the elderly (Yasin, 2020). However, the elderly, who cannot adequately use the technological developments and opportunities of the current age, were almost stripped of their legal rights and human needs, pushed out of the society they are a part of, and isolated. The difference between them and the other excluded group, the workers is that while workers can actually participate in production, it is thought that the old people can no longer work and therefore cannot produce. Being unable to work also brings with it the possibility of being prepared for the sacrifice. However, the existence of people over the age of 65 who still have to work and those who continue to think and be productive in Turkey were ignored. It is clear that the main aim is not only their health while the Turkish state pushes the elderly out of society and leaves them in the "threshold zone" with its circulars.

Refugees who have settled in or are trying to settle in different geographies with the migration mobility accelerated by the ongoing wars and poverty in recent years constitute another large group among those left out with this pandemic. Refugees who are considered foreigners or "guests" because they come from "outside", with the exception of some, do not have an identity document that they can use in the country where they are located. This means that they cannot benefit from the rights recognized by the law. These people, who do not have the right to access health services or live a healthy life, to work in a job where they can survive, to study in a field of their choice, are seen as carriers of an epidemic that spreads between

countries, as they come from another country. This perspective pushes them directly out of society. These people, who have been made the main material of political maneuvers, are perhaps the people who have been and remain the most accused since the beginning of the Pandemic. Refugees, who are expected to comply with the prohibitions and newly determined rules, and who are punished if they do not, constitute a large group among the people who were abandoned and left outside.

It is possible to argue that while determining the policies applied to workers, the elderly, children, refugees, and others during the epidemic, ways to reduce economic loss and increase earnings, if possible, are followed. However, the only reason for encouraging, or even coercing, work is not economic. As Foucault states, work has more than one function: besides its known productive function, its symbolic function, and its disciplinary function (Foucault, 2019b, p.103). For this reason, although working is generally thought of as producing a product, there are not few times when the purpose of training or disciplining groups of people comes to the fore. Especially in unusual situations such as epidemics, economic anxiety is of course a concern when evaluating the work, but it is also aimed to keep the society under control and to develop common behavior and thinking. In this regard, it can be said that during the Covid-19 period, both workers and the elderly were excluded by being included in certain designated spaces, but this exclusion was in the context of different reasons. While, in the case of workers, the aim was to keep them both productive and under control by continuing to work, in the case of the elderly category – in which decision-makers include people over the age of 65- the aim is to keep them locked up in their homes assuming they cannot work. However, it should not be forgotten that a large number of older people continue to work. Refugees, on the other hand, are surrounded by control mechanisms from all sides, as people who have to work even with very low wages but cannot benefit enough from the economic and social benefits of working and do not have any legal status, because they are people who will continue to be excluded even if the Pandemic is over.



The people who experienced a great deal of discrimination and exclusion and made up perhaps the largest group were those who encountered the Covid-19 virus and became ill. They were people who were avoided, who were not helped even if they needed to, who were afraid to be passed by even if their treatment continued at home, who died alone if they were hospitalized, and whose funerals could not be attended by anyone, including their families, just like in epidemics that emerged in different periods of history. People who have been fired from their jobs (Tekin, 2020) and people around distanced themselves from them because they carry the disease on themselves like a stigma even after recovering from the disease. It is worth noting that a similar attitude also applies to healthcare professionals who treat patients. In other words, everyone who had encountered or may have encountered the disease, or rather the virus, was now perceived as outsiders and the doors were closed in their faces.

Although the policy was eventually changed, it is possible to say that the whole society was abandoned in countries that did not need to take very strict measures at the beginning of the Pandemic. After this period, which was short-lived and faced high death rates, they, like other countries, began to impose rules, obligations, and prohibitions. And a similar landscape emerged.

### **3.2.THE DISOBEDIENTS**

Bentham says that in his *Panopticon* design people should be watched for as many reasons as possible and think that they are being watched at any moment, even when they are not being watched (Bentham, 2019). We see in the text that surveillance houses have purposes such as detention, imprisonment, isolation, forced labor, and education. Today, the view of this watchhouse model is the prevailing one. There are some justifiable points to this opinion. With technological inventions that no longer need the human eye, there is the probability and possibility of monitoring every area of life. This probability and possibility also lead people to think that they are being watched at any moment and lead them to act with this thought. While

people are acting with a kind of self-censorship every hour of the day and everywhere, with the start of the Pandemic, as a result of the tightening of the surveillance and control mechanisms, they have been pushed towards loneliness where it is not possible to be alone.

It is inevitable that loneliness, which is kept under control and surveillance, will have some consequences after a while. Because it is inevitable that people who think that they have been abandoned and constantly controlled, who are restricted, who have to work much harder than usual, who are unemployed and have serious economic difficulties, and in the meantime, who have access to a lot of true or false information via the Internet will rebel. Seeing that even in a state of exception such as a pandemic, political interests are prioritized, people are grouped, and only certain groups are included in the bans, while others are not subject to any rules (Sözcü, February 22, 2021), knowing that the economic and social burden is placed on these groups, and most of the time the blame falls on them formed a crack. This crack has led to fissures and even fractures in different areas in different places.

La Boétie said that “the more masters a person has, the more unhappy he/she is” (La Boétie, 2020, p.18). Today, almost five hundred years after La Boétie, people do not know the number of their masters, or even who their masters are. The unhappiness caused by this obscurity can lead to the wish and desire to get out of the state of voluntary servitude in extraordinary times such as the Pandemic. Many factors such as increased prohibitions, reorganized daily life, the increase in the number of –metaphorically speaking- watchtowers everywhere, an unknown disease and fear of death, the possibility of being criminal and stigmatized at any moment, have been factors in people’s ability to fall outside the expected or desired patterns of behavior.

During the process of the pandemic, there have been many mass movements, some of which are reasonable and understandable and some of which were turned into a complete outburst of anger, against the background of which a large number of factors were involved. We can generally say that they were based on the rejection of this mechanism of pressure and control. In this process, the blocking of mass

street movements with the bans issued in many countries, perhaps most negatively affected the workers.

In April 2020, the “dismissal ban” (Resmi Gazete, April 17, 2020), which was issued in Turkey for the purpose of protecting the rights of workers, was implemented with many exceptions. The most striking point in the decree regulating this temporary ban was the exception that employees who do not comply with the "rules of morality and goodwill" are not within the scope of the ban and may be fired. Predictably, employers laid off a large number of workers based on this exception. Mass events such as press statements, strikes, and demonstration marches, which are ways for dismissed workers and other workers with whom they work, to seek their rights, were outlawed on the grounds of the pandemic. These prohibitions worked for a short time for the anxiety about contracting the disease kept people immobile for a while. But over time, people began to take to the streets, said that it would be better to get sick and perhaps die than to be unable to meet their vital needs because of not being able to work. The workers, who thought that they had been subjected to a clear injustice, started protests to organize and regain their rights that were taken from them. Moreover, most of them were suddenly declared "immoral" and "malicious" and dismissed from the workplace where they had been working for many years, and it was not possible for them to accept this (Gül, 2021).

It is not possible to draw a universal or written, concrete framework of moral rules. They may vary according to every society and every time. Therefore, the consensus of the whole society is not needed to qualify a person as moral or immoral. Sometimes, the rules set by a small group of people reveal the moral norms of that group, and certain forms of behavior can be viewed as inappropriate or disapproved. Sometimes, there is an attempt to apply the rules determined by a small group to the entire society. In other words, the rules of morality, which are considered to be mostly based on social acceptance, can also be determined by a group of people who hold power despite being in the minority. And this is mostly in the hands of a certain minority group that has decision-making authority. Despite the dismissal

ban in Turkey, the dismissal of workers by declaring them "immoral" and "malicious" was also carried out by such a group (Deutsche Welle, January 19, 2021). The worker, whose morality was not in doubt one day, became immoral the next day. Of course, it is clear that political economy is at play here. The argument of the moral rules, which is suitable for use in many fields, is obviously presented here at the service of economy and politics, which are inseparable from each other.

People from different fields, especially the dismissed workers, who have to close their shops or think that they are not given sufficient economic support (Independent Turkish, November 27, 2020) and artists who are unemployed due to the closure of their workplaces or time limits (Susma24, 4 June 2021), began to take to the streets. In Turkey, which follows an oppressive policy, these actions and activities were mostly suppressed by the police force and it was tried to ensure that they are not repeated by means of detention, fines and lawsuits. The actions of these -disobedient- people, who were not in large numbers, do not seem to have led to much change, at least for now. However, it is undeniable that they have shown a way to those who have spent most of their lives in 'voluntary servitude'. It is possible to say that they were instrumental in introducing them to the well-known saying: "The problem is not disobedience, the problem is obedience" (Gross, 2020, p.17).

Those who took to the streets were not only those who were thrown into an economic difficulty by taking away their work and therefore their economic and social rights. Rather than the content of the bans, which were determined during the pandemic period and changed the existing regulation of daily life, those who were against the prohibition situation itself also took to the streets. In the first months when the epidemic started to spread, some of the people who first closed themselves in their homes in a state of ignorance and panic along with the whole world began to refuse to accept this situation after a while. It is not surprising that these objections arise mostly in Western societies, where freedoms are thought to be widely used. However, what is surprising is that these actions were partly led by far-right or conservative groups or political parties in the beginning (Özkan, January 25, 2021). People who took to the streets attacked shopping centers,

workplaces and even hospitals, and violently expressed that they did not accept the bans applied under the name of the Pandemic measure especially the curfews. These people faced serious reactions because they used violence, damaged public spaces and endangered people's health. They faced the threat of police brutality, detention and imprisonment. However, it is important to remember that prohibition can also be described as a form of a violent act.

As another act of disobedience that emerged or increased in different parts of the world during the period of the pandemic, it is also necessary to count the anti-vaxxers, as it is widely used. In addition to being against the bans, people who reject the vaccine for different reasons began to appear in many countries (Independent Türkçe, January 31, 2021). Among them, there were those who tried to explain why one should not be vaccinated with religious, moral and scientific arguments, and there were also those who opposed it simply because it was coerced<sup>1</sup>. These people have been stigmatized with labels such as anti-scientific, anti-human, selfish, backward, deviant, and have been excluded in many places by a significant part of the world community, although not by all or by the majority. Today, these groups are cited and blamed as the reason why the pandemic did not end and continues.

In short, it can be said that in the process of the pandemic, some groups of people have been accused of abandonment, exclusion, and stigmatization such as the elderly, children, workers, refugees, Chinese, those who reject bans, anti-vaxxers, and patients, albeit for different reasons and forms. While these people are seen as the reason for the emergence or continuation of the epidemic and are excluded, they are seen as people who should not be taken "in" after the epidemic is over. They will remain a kind of *usual suspect*.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the subject of opposition to vaccines, indecision and hesitation is a subject that needs to be addressed more broadly beyond the context of this thesis, too much detail is not given here.

## CHAPTER 4

### COVID-19: IS IT A NEW PANDEMIC OR A PANDEMIC AGAIN

Epidemic disease is a phenomenon that has led to different social transformations in history and has changed the content of concepts such as power and crime. When it turns into a global phenomenon, it leads to significant effects not only on some societies but also on the whole world and all people. So much so that, as we know from Foucault, we see that models of power are explained through examples of epidemics. Today, humanity is once again faced with another pandemic. And this Pandemic has the potential to change common concepts.

Scientists have stated that the last Pandemic that humanity has experienced to date is the Spanish Flu. Nearly a hundred years after the Spanish Flu, we encountered a new pandemic. Humanity, which has faced epidemics throughout history, is *again* struggling with a *new* pandemic. Again, because almost every century there is a pandemic, sometimes several. It is new because now we have a rapidly changing technology with increased opportunities, the power brought by scientific accumulation, and a nature that we have unfortunately plundered. Through technology, we can track the virus, those who are infected, those who touch the infected people, watch them, stop them, and shut them down. With science we can produce a vaccine at a speed that has never been done before and distribute it at the rate and amount we want. With our damage to nature, we can reveal viruses that were under the ice thousands of years ago. We are meeting the new Pandemic of the new millennium.

#### 4.1. HISTORY OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 Pandemic officially started on the last day of December 2019, when China reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) that some people in the city of Wuhan had a pneumonia-like disease (Atlas Dergisi, August 17, 2020).

Although opinions have been put forward that the disease emerged earlier than this date and has led to deaths, the lack of definitive evidence in this direction prevents us from making sure that these opinions are correct. The epidemic, which spread rapidly from Wuhan to neighboring cities and then to neighboring countries, began to be seen in many countries in a short time. Just 15 days after China made this notification to WHO, Thailand and Japan also reported one patient. By February 2021, the disease had already begun to appear on the continents of Europe, America, Africa, and Australia. On March 3, 2021, the outbreak had now spread to 73 countries. Within months, millions of people around the world fell ill and thousands died. The epidemic spread all over the world, except for a few island countries and North Korea. Many companies were working on vaccine production against this new epidemic, but the production of a highly effective vaccine became possible on November 9, 2021 (Deutsche Welle, November 9, 2021). Afterwards, with other vaccines developed by different companies, issues such as the distribution of these vaccines and to whom they would be given became the object of discussion. After that, the economic and therefore political calculations of the states came into play. While this study was being prepared, the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic continues to make sick, kill and make an extraordinary situation of daily life, even though its vaccine has been developed and many features of the virus have been discovered.

On March 11, 2020, when the World Health Organization declared the outbreak as a Pandemic, it was announced that the first case was seen in Turkey (Bianet, March 11, 2020). The fact that the necessary tests for the detection of the disease were not carried out sufficiently at the time led to suspicions that the virus was present in Turkey before. The fact that some decrees that prevent the work of independent health institutions and organizations have been issued by the state have strengthened this suspicion. In fact, contrary to the fact that many countries delegate the control, supervision and implementation of preventive mechanisms to scientific institutions, Turkey has carried out the whole process through its political own institutions and administrators, more precisely, in line with the decisions of the political party leader in power. Therefore, doubts continue on the objectivity and accuracy of the disclosure statements made on the subject. The view that the

information given about the case and mortality rates of the disease in their country does not reflect the truth is also valid for some other countries including North Korea, which claims that no cases have been seen yet.

During the process scientists in different geographies made different suggestions to reduce the effectiveness of the virus that caused the epidemic and to be able to treat people who fell ill. Although these treatment and prevention measures, some of which were also recommended by the World Health Organization, were followed around the world, they were applied differently in each country. To give the example of Turkey again, a drug that medical associations declared to be ineffective against the virus based on numerous international scientific studies and articles (Istanbul Medical Association, October 21, 2020), was discontinued by the Ministry of Health only about seven months after this statement (BBC News, May 8, 2021). There are still differences in practice in each country.

Currently, while the pandemic is still ongoing, issues such as the effectivity rate and duration of effectiveness of the vaccines used against the virus continue to be discussed due to the mutations of the virus. Despite the decrease in the number of people who get sick from time to time, the new mutations that have emerged spread the disease again (Saçı, November 30, 2021) making it difficult to make a prediction about when the Pandemic will end.

#### **4.2. PANDEMIC AND POWER**

During the pandemic, there were times when international travel was banned or stretched due to the number of cases increasing or decreasing. In a sense, borders were being raised and lowered, and governments were showing this as a way of dealing with the epidemic. Even though the Pandemic, which is cited as the reason, is still active, the opening of the borders, especially in the summer months and closing them again in the winter months, in contradiction with the suggestions of scientists, can only be explained by economic reasons. Since the restriction of the mobility of people and commodity disrupts the economic plans of the states and



therefore the capital owners, the profit-loss ratios are calculated and the policies are determined accordingly, but it is said that the policies are created by considering public health.

In a global outbreak, it is assumed that all people are equal and have the same probability of getting sick. However, although the outbreak (we can also call it a state of exception or an unusual situation) is global and causes similar experiences at different points, it is a situation whose effects are determined mostly by the individual attitudes of the states (Runciman, 2020). Referring to Hobbes, Runciman argues that being in political power means having the power over the life and death of the citizens and that it also means that the decisions to be taken in matters of life and death are in the hands of the political power beyond the control of the citizens. And he adds, *“We are a long way from the horrific and violent world that Hobbes tried to escape nearly 400 years ago. But our political world is still a kind of place that Hobbes would be familiar with”* (Runciman, 2020).

Although there are some autocratic and some more democratic-looking attitudes of different political powers in different geographies, perhaps what the Pandemic shows us is that power relations basically follow a similar pattern in most places. This is an area in which someone tells others what to do and what not to do or what they are allowed to do. Domination is frequently encountered in this area as well. Here, perhaps the most important thing we have learned from Foucault, as Preciado expressed, comes into play. *“There is no policy that is not a policy of bodies”* (Preciado, 2020). Because of Covid-19, it is known that people are given relatively more social directives such as when they can or can't go, what hours they should stay indoors, whom they should touch, and so on, as well as more personal suggestions or warnings such as what they should eat and not eat, how long they should sleep. There is a power that goes so far as to suggest that physical exercise information about how to keep one's body healthy when staying at home should be given via television or the internet or even broadcasted live and collectively exercised. It is not known whether the thinkers who talked about biopower before

are thinking about it today, but looking at the experiences lived today is stimulating in terms of understanding the concept.

Power, which uses digital technology, no longer needs institutions consisting of concrete buildings for the process of watching, controlling, manipulating, and building individuals. According to Eşitti, the walls of the Panopticon have expanded limitlessly (Eşitti, 2021). Thanks to the cyber world built on top of prisons, schools, hospitals, military barracks that still exist, or rather, to cover them all, the entire population has become controllable. The human being, who has been accustomed to the existence and use of mobile phones for a while, has become a creature that can be watched, followed and manipulated at any time, from the moment he/she starts using internet for shopping, working, and sometimes traveling. We are experiencing that the pandemic period accelerates this process and opens new doors.

The power of the period of pandemic has been using the techniques of models of power expressed by Foucault, which we can briefly formulate as prohibition, injunction and regulation. However, along with them, it also followed the path of penetrating the life of the whole society, almost infiltrating its cells, through individual people. In this way, it left no room for any behavior outside of its own knowledge.

It should be noted that the concept of power is expressed in daily use mainly by referring to politicians. However, in times of pandemics, it is possible to talk about the power of science, as science, more specifically medical science, comes to the fore and has a say. There are two forms of power here: The first is a power that is formed by being in the service of a certain power or becoming its instrument. The second one can be described as not recognizing any power other than itself and trying to create pressure.

The anxiety of not getting sick and surviving causes people to cling to every piece of information that will be revealed. We experience this from the approach of people to a large amount of information – some right and some wrong – spread

from the media during the days of outbreak. As such, every word of the doctors, who are thought to be experts in the subject, can be accepted as the only truth by the masses. It is a fact that a significant number of scientists, although not all of them, work for big companies. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that a significant number of scientists and, of course, physicians work in places where they are obliged to adhere to state policies. Therefore, when it comes to a global pandemic, it is a serious debate whether scientific studies can be carried out independently of the state and the capital. Because it seems difficult for the studies of scientists who prefer to act in line with the wishes of capital owners and companies or state authorities to be independent. However, as Yavuz Kılıç stated, only a scientist can decide what is scientific and what scientific research should be conducted. “The decision of any power or authority (church, government, political party, etc.) whether or not to conduct a scientific research is against the spirit of the scientific attitude from the very beginning” (Kılıç, 2020).

The fact that some scientific works are not independent because they depend on the state or capital will also lead to the fact that the knowledge is not independent. This may lead scientists to produce knowledge in line with the interests of political powers or capital companies. Moreover, the expectation that the information given to people will be accepted without question is a problem in itself. Because even if they work independently and are aware of their responsibilities, the unquestioning acceptance of everything scientists say will inevitably lead to the formation of scientific power. Hence, the period of the Covid-19 Pandemic also has the potential to become a scientific power.

### **4.3. PANDEMIC AND CRIME**

Powers that redesign daily life and individual behaviors –mostly a little arbitrarily– tend to declare anyone who goes outside of their design or attempts to go out as a criminal. This trend, which we have seen throughout history, including periods of epidemic, continues in the same way today. The epidemic, which is an

extraordinary situation, can be a disaster for the government, but it also brings an opportunity. Therefore, the government has to produce its own criminal in this situation, which it sees as an opportunity to avoid destruction and to strengthen or renew itself.

As Susan Sontag expressed through the example of cancer, the effort to cope with the disease is often described as a war (Sontag, 2020, p.76). Power wants to get out of this war not only as the winning side, but also as stronger. It is emphasized that this is a war waged by society, and everyone is expected and asked to fight the disease like a soldier and prevent its spread. However, in every war, there are also war criminals. It is these war criminals who are needed by power.

Those who do not comply with the established prohibitions, ignore the rules or ignore the suggestions are criminal. They are excluded, stigmatized, and punished. This punishment is applied in front of society to set an example and prevent others from committing the same crime. Since we now live in a more humane age and the idea that brutal forms of punishment are not accepted, perhaps they do not punish the criminal in the same way as they dismembered Damiens' body in the town square in the 18th century. But by beating, by giving arbitrary punishments or fines and by broadcasting them on television, the punishment is presented to the approval of the society and the society becomes a partner in this punishment. In addition, people who are said to be criminals because they endanger the health of society are humiliated when their criminal behavior are presented to society. It can be said that this humiliation is done to increase social approval. Considering that the internet is now in every house and people from all over the world have access to news, everyone sees the face of the person who does not comply with the rules and prohibitions, that is, the criminal and not only the authorities but the whole society punishes him.

The person who goes to throw garbage in the trash can near his house during the curfew in Turkey is a criminal. (Gazete Duvar, May 23, 2020) He is beaten and taken into custody. In India, the person caught on the street during the curfew by the police patrolling the street with sticks in their hands, is a criminal and is beaten

or asked to do some sports at the discretion of those policemen (NTV, April 26, 2021). Another remarkable point is that sports movements made to protect physical health are used for punishment and training. It is known that a similar attitude takes place in the barracks where soldiers are trained. In addition, a person who goes out shortly before the end of the curfew in Turkey and works for a very low daily wage is a criminal and will be fined an amount that he can only pay if he works for months (Sputnik Turkey, February 5, 2021). While these criminals are presented to society via television and the internet, they are humiliated (Yeni Şafak, November 20, 2020) and their faces are shown to everyone and they are punished by society (Takvim, 11 April 2020).

In Italy, it was seen that the mayors' warnings to citizens to comply with the bans through social media turned into a scolding, shouting, and even a threat. The words of a mayor in a very calm voice were “I hear that some students want to organize a graduation party, I will send the police, I will set the place on fire”. Or another mayor was heard shouting to a person on the street, “I am the mayor and you will obey the rules, I do not want to hear your apology” (Yılmaz, March 24, 2020). This is a threat to the whole society who watches the news via the internet. Thus, the effort of the authorized persons to bring society into line has found a new channel in the digital world.

Although it may be thought that a mixed power model is applied due to the use of prohibitions, injunctions and regulations during the Pandemy, it can also be argued that what is present is a different model that produces itself by using some techniques of the previous models. From this point of view, which has a serious margin of truth, it is possible to say that the concept of crime and the typology of criminals also changed.

The internet, which is a tool that was not in the hands of previous people in power and covers a large area of technology, has now become perhaps the most powerful war tool in the new power relations. Internet use in detecting, tracking and catching criminals has spread all over the world. Of course, this power of the internet also applies to those who want to commit behaviors that are considered criminal.

Cyberpower perhaps does not yet exist as it appears in the fictional world or dream of a dark future. However, it is already possible to see that this power will take an important place in the definition of the concepts of power and crime and the reconciliation and conflicts between these concepts.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE DUEL OF POWER WITH THE NEW CRIMINALS

When one thinks of crime, the first things that come to mind are murder and theft, intent on life and property. Maybe these two really underlie all definitions of crime. But sometimes making a sentence, expressing an opinion, stepping on the grass, or even shaking hands with a person can be considered a crime. Extraordinary times in history have extraordinary criminals, who are also sometimes even the subject of literature. However, in many literary works, we see these extraordinary criminals caught, the eyes of the system are always on them, and they are never overlooked. The eyes of the established system not only in books but also in life are now more on us. As soon as we break the boundaries, we will be caught. Boundaries are determined differently in each model of power. In the Covid-19 pandemic, which many people describe as an extraordinary period, the boundaries of crime were redrawn. But these boundaries, which the government has narrowed thoroughly or expanded –depending on which side it is looked at - are actually controversial for the entire society, although they are mainly for those who are in the second part of the outsiders (mentioned in the third chapter), that is, the disobedient. The reason why it is controversial for the whole society is that there is no longer a concrete, well-known and accepted definition of crime. Crime has now become a permeable concept.

While the relationship between power and crime is discussed in the historical adventure of crime, an epidemic is always encountered among those on the stage. While examining this relationship, it is useful to read by keeping the epidemic in the background (and sometimes at the forefront).

## **5.1. THE CURSE OF GOD: LEPROSY**

It is important that Foucault, in describing the models of power, gives the example of epidemic disease as well as the examples of urbanization and grain shortage. For periods of epidemics lead to the formation of a turning point and new power relations by redefining and reforming the techniques used by power. In the model of sovereignty, which is based on a legal structure consisting of laws and a religious structure consisting of rituals, lepers and non-lepers are separated. With this distinction, lepers are excluded from society (Foucault, 2007, p.24). Murat Serdar states that in Medieval Europe, where medical knowledge has not accumulated as much in today's world, many diseases were called leprosy. Leprosy was seen as the curse of God, and it was thought that it was necessary to separate them as a way to prevent its transmission (Serdar, 2014, p. 104). According to Serdar's quote from Trautman, "leprosy patients wore special clothes, wore rings, rang bells or gongs to warn those around them, and were even forced to walk on a certain side of the road depending on the direction of the wind" (Serdar, 2014, p.104). Stating that the diagnosis of leprosy was made by reliable people in the community, not by doctors, Serdar also states that the relations of these people with the community were cut off by a religious ceremony.

Although leprosy is not as common today as in the Middle Ages, it is still seen and still continues to be a fearful disease. It is possible that the persistence of this fear, despite the advances of medicine, is rooted in medieval anxieties of the divine curse.

In the Middle Ages, when leprosy was widespread, those who contracted the disease were either exiled from the city or were forced to live in leprosy houses that were built later (Serdar, 2014, p.104). In a period when leprosy houses did not exist or were not widespread enough, social pressure was applied to keep lepers exiled from the city with a religious ceremony. The lepers could not go to churches, contact children, or engage in trade (Serdar, 2014, p.104). The deprivation of the lepers from so many things with a religious ceremony can be seen as a kind of social punishment. It's as if the religious dimension of the event were acting together with the legal dimension. Marked and stigmatized by their clothes or the bells they had



to carry and ring, these people were also deprived of their legal rights provided by law.

In the model of power, exemplified by Foucault's leprosy, a dual distinction was thus created, and the person who was marked once, regardless of whether he was sick or not, was removed from society, excluded. It is possible to find that this exclusion technique was applied in different periods of history. In the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an, which are holy books, there are statements according to which those who oppose God's will and do not obey his orders are punished and will be punished with natural disasters and epidemics (Aydın, 2020, p.332).

## **5.2. THE BLACK DEATH: PLAGUE**

Due to the decrease in the number of lepers in the houses, hospitals, or prisons built for them vagrants, depraved women, lunatics, and criminals began to be locked up in these institutions (Foucault, 2006, p.54). It can be argued that in the period when confinement started to be used as one of the basic techniques of power, it was no longer the punishment of the law or the ceremonial arrangements of religion, but the means of disciplining that were put in action within these walls and buildings. Now, the lunatics, criminals, deviants, and patients were locked up in those buildings.

The method used when the plague turned societies and governments upside down was this method of confinement and quarantine. Foucault states that the cities and regions where the plague is seen are surrounded, limited, and quarantined by the plague regulations (Foucault, 2007, p.24). Power is disciplinary and works with rules that specify all details including what time people in quarantine zones can go out, and how they should be fed. The plague is deadly, and frightening, so people tend to follow –at least at first- these rules.

Özlem Genç, in her work titled "The Black Death: The 1348 Plague Epidemic and Its Effects on Medieval Europe" (Genç, 2011), quotes Elliott and states that a new species called the "plague brochure" emerged in the medical literature during

plague epidemics. In this brochure, precautions to be taken to avoid catching the plague were explained. This included advice to avoid excessive eating and drinking, not to have sexual intercourse, not to take a bath, to close the windows when going to bed, and to seek good smells in the morning. The same advice include was even the kind of smells the rich and the poor should seek (Genç, 2011).

The period of plague at which when extremely detailed rules of daily life and measures of quarantine were implemented to prevent going out of a certain area or home had become an excellent tool for power to discipline society. Power, furthermore, used this stick mainly on economically poor people. According to Genç, although the numbers are not exact, the majority of those who died were poor. The reason for this was that while the rich had the opportunity to escape from the city and go to safer places, the poor were deprived of this opportunity (Genç, 2011). Genç states that perhaps due to the demographic change experienced because of the economic change that occurs in every geography where the plague has settled and due to the high death rate, the people, who used to be obedient at first, started riots in increasing numbers (Genç, 2011). The unrest caused by the plague, which killed millions of people, especially led to peasant revolts (Levent Menteşe, 2020). It can even be said that these revolts are one of the important factors contributing to social change so much so that, as Artvinli quotes from Nikiforuk, the plague is an epidemic that brings the end of feudalism and sows the seeds of capitalism (Artvinli, 2020).

Disciplinary power, discussed by Foucault through the example of the plague, while applying confinement as the prominent technique, aims to place society into an order, to make society comply not only with the rules imposed but also fulfill the orders it declares unconditionally. In this period when disciplinary techniques are applied, people who break the determined rules are identified as criminals. The epidemic may have created another opportunity, but the main thing is that the society as a whole is 'obedient' even if there is no epidemic. The means of creating an obedient society is the activation of places of confinement and alignment such as hospitals, schools, prisons, and factory workshops. It is a mechanism where

every hour of the day is planned, where it is not possible to go out of the plan, and where everyone watches and controls everyone. Stating that discipline cannot be thought of independently of the body, which is its target, Konak and Ertan state that the logic of disciplinary biopower is the killing of disobedient bodies to keep all bodies alive (Konak, Ertan, 2020). In a sense, the disobedient is a criminal and should be punished.

### **5.3. VACCINATED TIMES: SMALLPOX**

The constant occurrence of epidemics, which changed governments and opened and closed ages through certain intervals in history accelerated scientific studies and especially medicine and allowed the trial of new treatment or prevention methods. As a result of these studies, vaccines that are used to protect against many diseases have started to be produced. According to the information given in the brochure of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) titled "Milestones in Vaccine Development in the World" (TTB, 2020), there are applications that can be included in the scope of vaccination in a period dating back to BC. Especially in China, in 590 BC, a method was applied to protect from smallpox, such as taking the inflammatory substances from the skin of the sick people and giving them to the noses of healthy people. With this method, it was possible to prevent the disease. However, with the development of positive sciences and their accumulation in history, it was possible to find a vaccine in today's sense in the 18th century (TTB, 2020).

In describing the model of governmentality with the example of smallpox Foucault emphasizes the importance of the fact that a vaccine was produced and applied (Foucault, 20007, p.24). The vaccination practices developed against smallpox since the 18th century completely changed the practices seen during periods of epidemy. Foucault states that although disciplinary methods come into play from time to time, the main thing now is data collection. It is important to have information about such things as how many people and how old people got sick, what is the mortality rate, what is the risk of dying or getting sick despite

vaccination, and what are the effects on the general population (Foucault, 2007, p.24). According to Gölbaşı, the practice that emerged through the practice of smallpox and vaccination, which Foucault gave as examples of methods of response to epidemics, is to keep phenomena under control within certain margins rather than imposing law and discipline (Gölbaşı, 2015).

The authoritarian, oppressive, and restrictive practices in sovereignty and in disciplinary power, which are illustrated by the examples of leprosy and plague epidemics, have been abandoned and a period in which a questionable freedom has been included in the paradigm. The reason why the freedom provided in this period is controversial is that the individual bodies that were previously targeted have now been replaced by the whole society with the newly emerging concept of population. Thus, individuals have become quantitative figures, statistical data, and they have become the elements to which measures are applied in order to prevent a deviation in the general calculations of the population. The fact that the population was now taken into account rather than the individual has changed the whole mechanism. Foucault says that the population is not the sum of legal subjects interacting individually or collectively. He states that "it appears in the constancy of phenomena that one might expect to be variable since they depend on accidents, chance, individual conduct, and conjunctural causes" (Foucault, 2007, p.103). And "the dimension in which the population is immersed amongst the other living beings appears and is sanctioned when, for the first time, men are no longer called "mankind (le genre humaine)" and begin to be called "the human species (l'espèce humaine)". (Foucault, 2007, p. 104-105).

Foucault, who says that governing techniques started to be applied with the birth of the population in the 18th century, calls this new model "governmentality" (Foucault, 2007, p.138). It is the population that is governed in this new type of state, which, according to Foucault, replaced the state of justice and the administrative state. In *Security, Territory, Population*, in which Foucault examines the model of governmentality in detail, he reveals the factors in the emergence of

the governmentalization process. He expresses these factors as pastoralism, new diplomatic and military techniques, and the police (Foucault, 2007, p.145).

It is important that Foucault uses the concept of population, because the people, which was the political subject of the past, has now become an element that opposes the regulation of the population, resists it, and disrupts the functioning of the system. The criminals of this period are those who oppose the conduct of their conducts by an authority. Governmentality is a system that works not by forcing by laws or orders, but by making choices free while manipulating them; not limiting them to a certain place; freeing the circulation of people and goods, but calculating to get the maximum profit from this circulation. It aims to provide this by having as much data as possible and by analyzing this data. In short, there is a power based on information. The technical tools used to retain this power of information have spread to almost every area of daily life. Many factors, from institutions, laws, architectural structures can be used as a tool of security techniques. Therefore, it is very difficult to stay away from the manipulation of the system. However, what has the potential to upset the balance may be the very freedom that people must be provided within the order for governmentality to continue. Those who cannot be manipulated or whose attitudes cannot be predicted, namely the people, are candidates to become the weak point of governmentality, and thus its usual criminals. To put it metaphorically, they, the people, that is, criminals, are the defects that smallpox leaves on the skin and are undesirable.

#### **5.4. PANDEMIC IN THE MILLENIUM: COVID-19**

Covid-19 emerged when it was thought that the times of epidemics were over and that although crises occur from time to time, there were ways out of these crises, and a more fluid and therefore sustainable system was established. The third millennium was entered with governments that developed the ability to govern by adding the possibilities of the digital world on top of the model of power described by Foucault as governmentality. While the arrival of the third millennium was the

scene of great celebrations all over the world, thoughts began to be expressed that our daily lives could be regulated and managed by artificial intelligence and robots, and that a global war would no longer be between humans but between humans and robots. Although there are no flying cars in the sky yet, predictions have begun to be made that science fiction works will come to be true very soon. Diseases would be cured, and the most feared cancer would be defeated. The cures for all diseases had already been found, but powers held by the capital were not putting them on the market, and it was not uncommon to come across opinions that could fall within the scope of conspiracy theory. But (although this metaphor doesn't sound quite right, since states define it as a war), a war broke out with an unexpected enemy and with an unexpected speed. Invisible creatures began to invade human bodies. It may not be that robots rule people, but the feeling that we have fallen into a science fiction film on television about an alien invasion or the transformation of infected people into zombies has gripped everyone.

Of course, the world that existed was not very heartwarming when we go back to just before the epidemic. Maybe there was no world war waged by dividing the whole world into two, but there was a war that fell on almost every piece of land (Bianet, 2018), (Varlık, 2021). The people who were trying to escape from these wars started a big wave of migration that was heading to different parts of the world. Contrary to the assumption that the borders were erased, every country to which the migrations headed has increased its border protection, and some - such as the USA and Turkey- even built walls. As the walls thickened, those held outside tried to survive as survivors of a journey to death. In different countries, oppressive and authoritarian leaders came to the fore in democratic elections, unbecoming modern times, and paved the way for the rise of nationalism. It is as if the world has been broken to pieces and each piece was put in a jar and placed within sight of a window that could watch it all. However, people are living under the assumption that they are free. Although conditions vary according to the economic situation of societies, many people have access to the Internet –via mobile phones, computers, etc. Although theories have been produced and discussed that the Internet provides constant surveillance, the idea that there is no escape from it is more common.

Therefore, people who took the benefits and not the risks, seriously are included in the widespread virtual network. Established in most countries, the cybercrime units created within the security devices in countries with totalitarian tendencies such as Turkey have considerably expanded the scope of considering virtual behaviors as crimes. However, people have no intention of going out of the digital world because of its irrefutable benefits, because daily life is still going on, if not exactly as before, in the street, at work, at home, in open areas, and other gathering places.

While the world continues to exist in a way that can be described as both an order and a mess, news of an unidentified disease from China began to be talked about all over the world within days, thanks to the internet. Although some countries did not pay much attention to this news at first, the virus, which started to be seen in almost all countries in a short time, forced itself to be taken seriously. Spreading all over the world, making millions of people sick, and killing many people, Covid-19 was the first global outbreak in nearly a hundred years. However, different epidemics were seen in different regions in this century, and those in the government gave different responses to these epidemics. For example, the last serious epidemic seen in Turkey before Covid-19 was the cholera epidemic in 1970 in Istanbul's Sağmalcılar neighborhood (Artvinli, 2020). Artvinli draws attention to the fact that after this cholera, the name of Sağmalcılar was changed to "Bayrampaşa" to erase the traces of the losses and suffering caused by the epidemic. However, he adds that this move of those in power does not show that they approach the issue with the necessary sensitivity. Because he says that the views about the lack of adequate measures and late intervention in the epidemic were discussed in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) and were recorded in the minutes (Artvinli, 2020).

Criticisms encountered in the example of the cholera epidemic in Turkey are also made for Covid-19 today. Although states have different practices, it is stated that they generally do not manage the epidemic well. In addition to different practices, there are also common points that attract attention. And it is seen that those who are targeted in the common attitudes and practices of these states or those who are

affected by these practices are similar. Some of the common practices and thoughts that emerged in most countries are as follows: 1- Putting the responsibility of getting sick on the people themselves, not on the state authorities. 2- Accusing different groups of people such as immigrants, the elderly, LGBTI+s, children, healthcare professionals, and patients within the concept of the foreigner. 3- Ensuring the ubiquity of surveillance. 4- Implementation of periodic curfews with the decrees and regulations issued. 5- Implementation of partial or total quarantine. 6- Restriction or prevention inter-country and inter-city entry and exit in some places. 7- Digitalization of education for the most part. 8- Extending the scope of work from home. Among these common practices, few of which are listed, the most prominent item, in terms of both using today's technology as a tool and including others, is undoubtedly the ubiquity of surveillance.

The idea that the era of epidemics is over or that even if small-scale epidemics happen to occur, they can be easily eliminated, was destroyed with Covid-19. It can be said that the existence of self-confidence in the past was based on the idea that technology is advanced, vaccines are used, and digital applications could prevent many possibilities. However, the emergence and spread of the Covid-19 epidemic and its transformation into a global threat primarily shook this self-confidence. Eventually, since the deadly effect of this disease, of which not much is known, was seen concretely, decisions have been taken quickly without thinking too much about what they might lead to. The fact that the epidemic could not be brought under control despite all the measures led to harsher practices by governments, which both reduced people's trust and caused reactions. With the unstoppable rise of the pandemic, the existing security devices have been revised and reached a new level. The authorities improved the existing surveillance tools, added new ones, and moved to surveillance everywhere and at all times.

David Lyon argues that “surveillance is a focused, systematic and regular interest in personal information for such purposes as influencing, managing, protecting and manipulating” (Lyon, 2013, p.31). Lyon adds to this definition that surveillance is not accidental or spontaneous but intentional and based on certain protocols and



techniques. Although surveillance used to be a face-to-face process, today, the continuity of digital surveillance is predominant. Surveillance can ultimately be considered as collecting information, analyzing it and developing some practices or policies with the obtained data. However, the point that should not be overlooked is that the people being watched are mostly, if not always, aware of this surveillance and even approve of it. Persons who consent to surveillance generally do not know by whom this collected information is requested or by whom it will be used for what purpose. They nevertheless approve it, because if they do not give consent, it becomes difficult to meet the needs of the digital age in order to continue their daily lives such as banking transactions, cell phone use, protection from terrorism, healthy living, and treatment. Lyon states that surveillance is a multidisciplinary practice (Lyon, 2013, p.37). Surveillance is an important tool for many fields such as politics, economy, law, communication, social sciences, and medicine, and they are often used jointly.

It has not even been half a century since Foucault took up the metaphor of panopticon and described the society of confinement and surveillance through it. But in this short period of time, new additions to the concept have been put forward with the effect of the change in technology, especially communication technologies. To describe the new situation, as Eşitti quotes from Mark Poster, the concept of "superpanopticon" has emerged, and the concept of surveillance has moved from physical to virtual spaces (Eşitti, 2021). Eşitti points out that to explain the surveillance milieu we live in Thomas Mathiesen uses the concepts of "synopticon" meaning simultaneous seeing and Emanuel Dimas de Melo Pimenta uses the concept of "omnipticon" meaning omnipresent (Eşitti, 2021). Today's surveillance system expressed in terms of different concepts inspired by Foucault has become much easier than before, with all personal data to be recorded, stored, and used in a way that settles in and occupies a very large part of our lives.

A settled surveillance system was already at hand when the Covid-19 pandemic began. But either because the unforeseen happened or because of the effect of strong self-confidence or because of another undetected effect, it turned out that this

surveillance system from the point of view of states was not sufficient. Thus, the system needed to be renewed, reconfigured, and additional applications were needed. Its area has also been expanded along with the definitions of places that are monitored via the Internet. In addition to closed-circuit cameras (CCTV) on the streets, workplaces, partially houses, and concrete places in the community, surveillance is also carried out via mobile phones and computers. In addition to these, some other surveillance and tracking applications have been introduced. As a reason for all of them, the prevention and control of the spread of the epidemic disease were used.

In many countries, applications used via smartphones have been developed and made available for people to use. As an example, the application in Turkey can be mentioned. On April 19, 2020, about one month after the appearance of the Covid-19 disease in Turkey, the application called "Life Fits Home" (HES) (Hayat Eve Sığar) was put in use via mobile phones (Voice of America, April 4, 2020). The fact that title of the brochure published by the Ministry of Health on the website to promote this application is "Life Fits Home", while the subtitle is "Safe Area - HES Code - Denouncement" (Ministry of Health of Turkey, 2020) is remarkable in terms of showing the purpose of the application. This is a real-time hotline. In other words, it is an informant system that is put into practice by the state with some regulations. (It has been found that whistleblowing is openly encouraged not only by phone applications but also by the governors (BirGün, 24 March 2021)). When the application was first used, it was said that there were purposes such as monitoring the whereabouts of patients and people who have come into contact with patients, whether they violated the quarantine rules, and knowing whether there are patients or contacts in the place when entering a place. However, within months, the application was updated and personal codes were created that made it mandatory for everyone to use (BBC NEWS, May 20, 2020). There was no legal obligation to obtain and use this code. But using the code was mandatory when traveling, entering public institutions, entering the cinema, the mall, the cafe, the bank, and more. Therefore, using the HES code was de facto, if not legally, compulsory. In the light of the collected data, it was possible to determine whether Covid-19

disease was passed through this code, whether any patient contacted the virus, whether they were vaccinated, and thus whether there was a risk for other people. Use for this purpose is acceptable in the government of the epidemic. However, in addition, through the HES code, it is also possible to detect which time of day one is located, what transaction is made from the bank, which movie was seen at which session in the cinema, which city was traveled on which date, by which airline or bus company, who was sitting next to each other during the trip, and so on. The HES application and code function exactly as a real notification mechanism in purpose.

The surveillance system, which has stepped up with the Covid-19 Pandemic, is able to detect personal preferences, lifestyles, behavior patterns, age, gender, nationality, independently of the epidemic and its government by knowing when and where exactly each person is doing following. The massive body of knowledge created by these collected and stored data inevitably creates a power. This power-knowledge has become capable of not only governing the pandemic but also governing, directing, and determining the potentials of all individuals in the society. While calculating the probability of an individual getting sick, it has also been able to calculate the tendency of another individual to commit a crime and the probability of his/her committing a crime. While this power is – arguably – useful for applications to end the epidemic, it is a major problem for people considered to have the potential to commit crimes. Because even before there is no crime yet, the potential criminal can now be pinpointed. At first glance, this may seem beneficial to society. However, considering that the concept of crime is a concept that can be produced, changed, that is fictionalized, and created according to the relations of power and interests prevalent in the society, it indicates a great danger. Moreover, thanks to the Pandemic, governments can set very comfortable rules by expressing that they are doing everything for public health. Therefore, the permeability of the concepts of crime and criminal has increased so that one who is an ordinary – innocent- person, may be deemed to be a criminal the next day. Someone who walks on the street without a mask can be punished without knowing that it is now

forbidden to go out without a mask, in accordance with a decision made the night before.

Of course, the permeability of the concept of crime does not occur only in the case of a criminal behavior that is considered to be relatively mild and does result only in a fine. For example, in Turkey, those who are against vaccination held a rally with the permission of the governor's office, and even though masking and physical distancing, which were dictated by decrees, were not respected, no legal action was taken (Habertürk, September 11, 2021). As another example, we can use the opening of Hagia Sophia as a mosque with the participation of the President of Turkey himself and about 350 thousand people (Sputnik, July 24, 2020). On the other hand, the activities and actions of Boğaziçi University students who oppose the appointment of the rector – although they paid attention to the use of masks and the distance rule – were banned on the grounds of the pandemic and with the warning that there might be terrorist provocations. The police intervened violently and detained hundreds of students, tens of them were given house arrest and some were arrested and jailed. (BBC NEWS, February 2, 2021).

As the examples show us, as a result of the increase in the permeability of crime in the Pandemic, not only does the definition of crime change from day to day but of those who show similar behavior it can be arbitrarily decided which are criminal/guilty and which are innocent. At this point, it is possible to say that the authorities are using or trying to use the Covid-19 Pandemic as a tool to create an authoritarian structure, especially through the concept of crime.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, the transformation of the concepts of power and crime during the Covid-19 Pandemic period has been discussed, Foucault's analyses have been taken as the starting point, and the differences in the current pandemic period have been considered. Given that the pandemic is still rampant examples from individual practices have been given. Since the concepts of power and crime are thought to be concepts that produce or at least feed each other, they have been discussed together.

The differentiation of power relations in every period of history sometimes with laws from the top, sometimes with prohibitions or regulations, and sometimes with the freedoms given to people as well as the fact that each model and method of power found its place in these pandemic days has also led to discussions. As Konak states, it can be said that a hybrid method has been applied. (Konak, 2020). As some people who are engaged in practical activities in the political field claim, it is possible to think that the door to a new kind of fascism is being opened or also to think that being observed everywhere at any time is a necessary condition of being safe. In addition, the practical reflections of daily life require a deeper and new thinking beyond this duality. It is important for us to consider the relations of power that have fallen to our share with this new thinking and to try to understand where crime is positioned in the context of these relations. Because perhaps this effort to understand will be the first step toward a new meaning.

To date, the pandemic in which around 300 million people have been ill and more than 4 million people have died (Evrensel, December 2, 2021), is about to fill its third year and is now in a habituation phase. The masks, which turn into accessories and go from color to color, from pattern to pattern with the different designs of fashion designers, are not just a necessity, they are treated as a complement to the outfit. Disinfectants or colognes carried in bags are not used that often anymore. In the first days, people who walk away from other people while walking on the street and give way to the other person are no longer nervous when they bump into each other. The daily number of cases and deaths that are expected every day with

curiosity and a little fear is no longer of much interest. In any case, governments do not publish these numbers on a regular basis either. However, these behavioral patterns, which can be described as habits, are certainly not a return to the old or a 'normalization' in the commonly used sense.

It is clear that all public encounters also have changed along with human actions during the pandemic process. According to Aykotalp, the society produced by repetitive human actions has been reconstructed through new repetitive actions occurring under new changing conditions (Aykotalp, 2021, 221). Although the number of people who follow the daily number of cases has decreased over time, the news that a new mutation has appeared or a newly discovered information about the effectiveness of vaccines is enough to gather everyone in front of the television. In other words, the epidemic continues to be an important agenda of people who are thought to not care about it. And daily routine behavior has perhaps been irreversibly altered. Although the number of people walking on the street without a mask is increasing, each of them has a mask in their pocket or bag. Or, when no one used to pay attention to someone who coughed on the bus or even the person was offered water now people show move away from that coughing person and cover their faces more tightly. And the coughing person becomes the target of reactive and fearful glances as if he were a dangerous criminal.

Epidemics are the periods when the anxiety about protecting human existence is at its highest. A social existence anxiety arises when the self-protection behavior of each individual spreads to the whole society. And this changes the established vital behaviors, daily routines, conventions in moral values, and interpersonal relationships. This anxiety, in a way, the fear of death, can cause people to be more easily manipulated and managed. Moreover, in addition to this fear of death, the returns of people's economic income level differences are also remarkable. In particular, the anxiety of low-income people to lose their job or the fact that they have to continue to work by risking their lives despite the epidemic in order not to lose their job has a great effect on this anxiety. It should also be emphasized that outbursts of anger and especially domestic violence incidents increase due to the

increase in the level of mass anxiety (Ergöner, Biçen, Ersoy 2020; 25). It would be useful to add to these the specific sensitivities of certain groups (elderly, women, LGBTI+ people, children, refugees, patients, healthcare professionals, etc.) mentioned in the sections above.

It is possible to conclude that the policies carried out by governments during the epidemic period, the majority of which are claimed to have a democratic structure, acted on the basis of people's anxieties and fears. It is seen that through promises such as a healthy society or a return to the old normal, the governments in power have increased their repressive policies and have moved quite far away from the democratization they attribute to themselves. The use of closures, orders, rules, and decrees resembling the disciplinary society described by Foucault are some of the methods applied. In addition, it is known that prohibitions and punishments are also used, which almost suggest a return to the period of sovereignty. The model of power, which uses the techniques of governmentality such as data collection, analysis, manipulation, and re-establishing the truth, has taken them to a higher level. Surveillance techniques, which have reached an advanced level with the digital technology opportunities, have been legitimized and received public approval, even demanded, on the grounds of the pandemic.

While the possibilities of the digital world in which people live are gradually expanding, the new power created by these possibilities is building itself by adding new ones to the defined techniques. Although this construction process has been going on for a short time, the Covid-19 Pandemic has accelerated this process and opened the doors for it to be permanent after the Pandemic. It is significant that Foucault's notion of Great Confinement and his analyses through Bentham's Panopticon came to the fore and began to be discussed in the days of Covid-19. The fact that digital surveillance is possible in all areas of life, anytime and anywhere indicates a new type of panopticon. In this process, tools (drones, etc.), which are known to be used in wars and fall into the category of weapons, were widely used by the authorities to control the pandemic (Doktorclub, 10 April 2020). In addition, it is known that similar practices such as wearing electronic handcuffs applied to

criminals are also applied to patients in some countries. (Soybaş, 2020). Thanks to the new possibilities of surveillance, a mechanism is being set up where everyone can be a criminal at any time.

With the new format being created by power developing new techniques and adding them to existing ones and trying to take over the digital world, and with the concept of permeable crime shaped by this format, it is now possible to draw the conclusion that we have come to another turn. The Covid-19 Pandemic has played an important role in this turn. Almost the entire society has been trapped and, it can be argued, taken under control with its own consent through mobile devices, computers, prohibitions, rules, and other enforced tools. Perhaps, as Agamben said, our society no longer believes in anything but bare life (Agamben, 2020). However, this does not mean that there is no way out. Within this whole bleak framework, a way out can still be found. In response to this new model of power that is still being formed, new forms of resistance and ways out will emerge. Although most of the rules of the game have changed due to the pandemic, the workers' strikes and actions are seen in many countries, including Turkey, are a sign of this. In addition, the prominence of the 'freedom' discourse in protest demonstrations held in different geographies of the world also shows the possibility that a way out can be found.



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