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## **LEARNING FROM BAUSDRILLARD AND FOUCAULT**

### **Consumer Culture, Social Milieus and the Governmentality of Lifestyle**

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A specter is haunting postmodern societies - the specter of consumerism. But neither the powers of old nor new Europe nor even those overseas have recognized, that consumerism itself became a power that is eager to take over „leadership“ from the nation state-bound rationalities of power.

People will no longer be governed by state institutions or political leaders, but by their alleged free choice to consume. The aim of this article is to present a theoretical framework to analyze emerging new power relations in postmodern societies that are based on aesthetic decisions. Bringing together Jean Baudrillard's early and groundbreaking analysis of consumer society (Baudrillard 1970; 1998) and Michel Foucault's concept of neoliberal governmentality with new insights and strategies of market research might enlighten the structure and functioning of evolving power relations within and across societies and nation states. This political rationality of consumer culture constitutes a genuinely postmodern pattern of inter-individual and inter-group power relations and forms what I call the „governmentality of lifestyle“.

## **POSTMODERN CONSUMER CULTURE AND STYLES OF EVERYDAY LIFE**

In his analysis of „consumer culture and postmodernism, Mike Featherstone (1991) highlights a visible and tangible aesthetization of everyday life. *Aesthetization* seems to be the central development within the „postmodern formation“ (Frankenberger 2007, 23-64) of contemporary societies. Closely linked with Baudrillard's idea that reality is transformed into images (Baudrillard 1983) and the postulate of a loss of sense of history and a fragmentation of time into a series of ongoing presents (Jameson 1984a), Featherstone defines the postmodern experience as an “intensification of image production in the media and consumer culture in general” (Featherstone 1991, 65). Two main forms of expression of the aesthetization of everyday life can be distinguished<sup>1</sup>: First, borders between art and everyday life are erased; Second life itself is turned into a work of art. This kind of art is mainly expressed through aesthetic consumerism: “This dual focus on a life of aesthetic consumption and the need to form life into an aesthetically pleasing whole on the part of artistic and intellectual countercultures should be related to the development of mass consumption in general and the pursuit of new tastes and sensations and the construction of distinctive lifestyles which has become central to consumer culture” (Featherstone 1991, 66).

For Baudrillard, postmodernism is an aesthetic simulation that emerged from the dislimitation of reality and image .As he puts it, “Today it is quotidian reality in its entirety

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<sup>1</sup> Featherstone originally distinguishes a third form of expression: the primate of visuality, that manifests in the „rapid flow of signs and images which saturate the fabric of everyday life in contemporary society“ (Featherstone 1991:67). This obvious pattern is not discussed in this context, as it is considered as the basis of expression in the digital world.

- political, social, historical and economic - that from now on incorporates the simulating dimension of hyperrealism. We live everywhere already in an aesthetic hallucination of reality" (Baudrillard 1983a, 148). This logic of consumer society originates in the restructuration of production and productive forces that do not only shape economic relations but social relations as a whole. In his analysis of consumer society, Baudrillard brings the origin of new social and economic relations to light: "The truth is, not that 'needs are the fruits of production', but that the system of needs is the product of the system of production.[...] By system of needs, we mean that needs are not produced one by one, in relation to the respective objects, but are produced as consumption power, as an overall propensity within the more general framework of the productive forces" (Baudrillard 2006, 74-75). And furthermore, "Consumption is a system which secures the ordering of signs and the integration of the group: it is therefore both a morality [...] and a communication system, a structure of exchange" (Baudrillard 2006, 78)

Following this argumentation, "lifestyle" becomes the core category of postmodern identity reengineering and conduct of life<sup>2</sup>. Within the postmodern formation of societies the choice between styles is more open than ever. Aesthetic signs and images of everyday life become building blocks for the construction of lifestyles. Signs and symbols are not only used to represent specific images and lifestyles but also become structures of individual life. Taking into account the economic background of consumer culture, Baudrillard summarizes, that "the truth of consumption is that it is not a function of enjoyment, but a function of production and, hence, like all material production, not an individual function, but an immediately and totally collective one." (Baudrillard 2006, 78). Collectivity is inevitable for mass production of commodities and images - as individualized they may be - as it depends on customer groups that are large enough to make production profitable. This also implies the necessity of tools to measure the aesthetic patterns of consumption as well as their dynamics. Not only is there a new kind of social segmentation but also a highly complex system of technologies of measurements invented and implemented within the framework of the consumer society.

## THE SOCIO-AESTHETIC SEGMENTATION OF SOCIETIES

Thus, social milieus are the first choice to analyze consumer society as they are considered to be the social equivalent of individual lifestyles. They are defined as groups of like-minded people sharing similar attitudes, value orientations, principles of life conduct and relations to others. People belonging to the same social milieu

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<sup>2</sup> With Kotler/Bliemel (1992, 259) lifestyle can be defined as the individual pattern of conduct of life that manifests in the activities, interests and attitudes. For a further discussion see Hartmann 1999, Bourdieu 1982 and Goffman 1975

additionally share patterns of interpretation and construction of their environment (Hradil 2006, 4). Despite of differences in the interpretation of milieu-concepts, most of these share the idea of socio-aesthetic segmentation of postmodern societies. One concept of social milieus is the SIGMA-model, developed in the early 1980ies by B. B. Flaig and J. Ueltzhöffer. They define social milieus as groups of people with characteristic common value orientations and lifestyles. (Ueltzhöffer 1999, 629). The basic thesis of the model derives from insights in consumer society and argues that aesthetization of life worlds unfolds dislimiting and structuring powers, and, at the same time shape the appearance of postmodern societies by creating new structural patterns, that offer subjectively meaningful identities and social relationships. Structural characteristics of societies are largely formed by these socio-cultural and aesthetic identity engineering. In addition, the model of social milieus includes aspects such as the structuring and denominating power of socio-economic conditions that in turn influence lifestyles. In other words, lifestyles are to a large part determined by aesthetic considerations, but are also influenced by age, income, education, profession and milieu background. Due to the relative stability of value orientations and socio-aesthetically chosen relationships, social milieus are rather stable and, according to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, have rather open boundaries than exact limits. In a nutshell, the model of social milieus is based on the principles of subjectivity, aesthetization, holism, stability, convertibility, and uncertainty. Thus, milieu analysis seeks to capture all subjective and objective characteristics that constitute the collectively shared socio-aesthetic identity of individuals, i.e. value orientations, aim of life, attitudes towards work, leisure time, different aspects of conduct of life, every day aesthetics, and socio-economic data. To do so, milieu research uses qualitative as well as quantitative methods<sup>3</sup>.

With SIGMA milieu tools, milieu segmentations are conducted for 26 countries. At least for highly developed countries, the results display common transnational trends of postmodernization of lifestyles and value orientations. Milieus tend to transcend the borders of nation states and they tend to develop common consumptive and aesthetic patterns. This is one reason why milieu studies are so effective for market research and target group detection.

## THE CONCEPT OF GOVERNMENTALITY

Whereas lifestyle and milieu research take a closer look on individual and collective restructuration of social life, which are supposed to be rather based on deliberate, rational and aesthetic considerations, core aspects of the “postmodern formation”

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<sup>3</sup> For a further and more detailed description of the milieu model see Ueltzhöffer 1999 and Ascheberg 2006

remain in the dark: When modes of social conjunction change, this will also cause or be paralleled by changes in other dimensions of societies. In brief, social change implies change in power relations.

To deal with uncertain or even unclear power relations, Michel Foucault's approach of governmentality offers valuable insights. Foucault defines three core aspects of governmentality: First, it is an “(...) ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security” (Foucault 1991,102). Second, governmentality comprises a historical development, a “(...) tendency which, over a long period and throughout the west, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, etc.) of this type of power which may be termed government, resulting, on the one hand in the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses, and, on the other, in the development of a whole complex of *savoirs*” (Foucault 1991, 102-103). Third, Foucault underlines the dynamics of change in the exercise of power, as he defines governmentality as the “(...) result of the process, through which the state of justice of the middle ages, transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gradually becomes governmentalized” (Foucault 1991, 103). When applied to social phenomena, this rather vague definition that Foucault rendered more precise in his lectures of 1978 and 1979 for what he calls neoliberal governmentality (Foucault 2007 and 2008), offers two main strengths. On the one hand, the analytics of power with the concept of government enables researchers to analyze aspects of social life that could not be approached with a narrow understanding of politics. As Foucault defines power as action on others' actions, it is possible to apply his framework to all interaction. On the other hand, with the method of archeology to analyze the history of governmentality, Foucault can show dynamics of government rationalities and power technologies that are closely linked to processes of social and economic change.

For Foucault, the contemporary neoliberal governmentality with its various combinations of rationalities and technologies is the pluralistic equivalent of power to the postmodern formation of society.

Following Foucault, power is inseparable from subjects and their conduct of living, as he assumes that all interaction between individuals and groups is based on the pattern of action upon others' actions, which in turn is his definition of power exercise. Thus, changes of government rationalities will cause effects on subjects and processes of subject formation. This allows the expansion of consumer culture analysis on aspects of power and power relations. Foucault called these power relations

based on self-responsibility and self-care of the homo oeconomicus the neoliberal government rationality or governmentality.

Foucault's concept of government comprises all areas and forms of action that contain aspects of control, guidance, and supervision of individuals and / or groups. This includes techniques of self-guidance as well as leadership techniques. Thus, Government refers to all domination and governance, that can be exercised on one self and others, on the body and the soul as well as on the modes of action. Second, it refers to a circular process or exchange process between individuals (Foucault 2004 a, 183). With Foucault (1993, 2005f), four kinds of government technologies can be differentiated:

1. technologies of production refer to abilities and skills to produce, transform and manipulate things
2. technologies of signification comprise all techniques of use of signs and sense to produce signification. They are techniques of sign systems closely linked to knowledge and forms of knowledge that allow to deal with signs, symbols and signification.
3. techniques of domination (Foucault 1993a) or techniques of power (Foucault 2005f, 968) characterize all techniques to guide, dominate, discipline and bring individuals to show certain forms of action or behavior. They form individual behavior and subordinate individuals to intended purposes of authority. Within these processes, subjects are transformed into objects. (Foucault 2005f, 968)
4. technologies of the self: Foucault defines them as technologies that enable the individual to conduct operations and manipulations on his or her own body or soul, thinking, behavior and mode of existence in order to change in a way that allows to reach a state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality (Foucault 2005f, 968). These techniques thus comprehend complex forms and mechanisms of self-regulation, self-domination and manipulation of behavior.

Foucault normally focuses on the dualism of technologies of the self and technologies of domination within the analysis of the genealogy of the subject: “(...) the points where the technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself. And conversely, he has to take into account the points where the techniques of the self are integrated into structures of coercion or domination. The contact point, where the individuals are driven by others is tied to the way they conduct themselves, is what we can call, I think, government” (Foucault 1993a; 2003). To implement and to sustain this complex of government, the other two technologies are inevitable.

## THE GOVERNMENTALITY OF LIFESTYLE

Without the postmodern change of societies a governmentality of lifestyle is unthinkable. The aesthetization of everyday life cannot work in a world without individualization, pluralization, fragmentation and contingency, nor can it develop without consumer society. On the basis of this aesthetization, theories of lifestyle and social milieus are developed to analyze consumer culture and patterns of consumption of individuals and groups.

Thus, if a governmentality of lifestyle exists, then it has to be shown in what ways all four kinds of technologies described in the former paragraph interact and tie themselves to the “subject” or idea of lifestyle and constitute a complex that is aimed at the domination of the self or the others. The existence of an ensemble of technologies and actions evoking each other and responding to each other by referring to the central category of lifestyle has to be proved. This is the aim of the following paragraphs.

### **Techniques of signification: Lifestyle- and milieu-research**

A comprehensive analysis of society provides information on basic socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions. This constitutes the informational foundations for considerations on lifestyle and subjectivation. Subjects live under these postmodern conditions and develop certain patterns of conduct of living. The exploration of these patterns is one technique of signification that identifies and establishes contexts and interrelations of sense and meaning in these patterns. This technique thus creates significations and terms to enable communication. Not until signification is created, the linkage between social change, culture, and aesthetics pronounces the individual and social meaning of lifestyle. It shows how social change causes variances in culture and formation of identity and how aesthetics become the core element of identity engineering. The term “lifestyle” is construed and constituted as relevant category.

Depending on research strategies, the terms “lifestyle”, “conduct of life”, and “way of living” are not systematically distinguished, but in all approaches refer to a common reference of systems of action and behavior (Hartmann 1999, 15). This in turn allows a widespread signification and analysis of conscious (action) as well as unconscious (behavior) aspects. In addition, the concept enables the docking of individualizing as well as totalizing techniques of power. For example, the criterion of identification is crucial for the definition of lifestyles. As Hartmann (1999,47) argues, people with similar lifestyles must be able to identify each other as members of the same group on the basis of action, statements, gesture and creation that allow conclusions on subjective characteristics of the actors.

At this very point milieu research picks up on the lifestyle-concept and its postulate of identity engineering and conduct of life on the basis of aesthetic decisions in every-

day life. As techniques of signification, milieu research creates sense and terms that refer to “social conjunction” of individuals with mutual identification and similar life-styles. While lifestyle-approaches describe forms of social distinction, milieu approaches refer to social conjunction and construct social milieus to denote and capture lifestyle-groups. On this basis, highly precise and distinctive instruments are developed that produce significations of lifestyles and milieus in continual circles and thus are frequently adjusted. Milieu research (and market research as a whole) contributes substantially to the understanding and the decryption of postmodern change. As a result, a new form of social segmentation of postmodern societies is construed, that is crucial for the adjustment of further techniques of power referring to individuals and groups.

Therefore it can be assumed that at the beginning of a readjustment of power relations and governmentality the development of new technologies of signification is the essential factor. This underlines the meaning of the power/knowledge complexes, Foucault refers to (XYBGD): The effective and efficient execution of power deserves a close linkage to knowledge. This, in turn, does not mean necessarily that techniques of signification are developed to govern, but in turn emerge when there is a substantial lack of knowledge and then become relevant as new power techniques, filling this gap. Market research in general and especially milieu research become central techniques of signification within the governmentality of lifestyle, as they permit the development of new techniques of the self and of domination for specific purposes.

### **Techniques of domination**

The comprehensive knowledge captured and signified by milieu studies can be used as a starting point for the adjustment of action upon action. To characterize the members of milieus, their leisure time activities and their role perceptions are captured, typical statements are identified, preferences in literature, newspapers and television broadcasting are registered, the interiors of housings are described as well as the subjective meaning of money. Taken together, this knowledge allows conclusions concerning personality structures and emotional dispositions of individuals (Ulrich 2006, 129). At this very point socio-aesthetic segmentation and milieus are merged with techniques of power. Milieu-typologies are extremely useful to analyze target groups in order to create power/knowledge that can be used to influence consumers. The sophisticated strategies of marketing and product management use this knowledge to take concise action on the action of individuals or groups and thus constitute new technologies of domination via lifestyle.

It is quite telling that the development of these specific technologies of domination takes place rather in the economic field of consumer and marketing research than in

politics, even if empirical election research tries to segment political voter markets for parties, governments and the media. The success of consumer research in turn indicates a general trend of economization of the social sphere in the course of the neo-liberal governmentalization. Government rationalities genuinely serving economic purposes spread out in the sphere of lifestyle: The structuring force of income and profession diminishes whereas the ideas of transcending the own identity and of creating new spaces of opportunity experience a growth of importance for the segmentation of postmodern societies, as social milieus at least in parts crosscut those characteristics. These ideas are systematically used to incorporate individual and collective aesthetic choices and wishes in every day life. Domination here works indirectly through selective influence based on the knowledge of milieus and their characteristics.

As techniques of domination in pluralized societies cannot predominantly care about all individuals as such, the creation of relevant clustered addressees is a vital technique of domination.

Social milieus thus facilitate the social location of individuals for the purpose of social conjunction and group generation. These clusters of individuals with similar lifestyles are more than simple aggregates of consumers, as purchase decisions are based on far more fundamental underlying considerations about the conduct of life.

On this basis a “we-economy” of power is implemented, that identifies common characteristics and wishes of milieu members and makes them utilizable for power purposes. In postmodern consumer society, products are charged with images and aesthetic content that make them more attractive and therefore sold more often<sup>4</sup>. It is the clustering on the basis of lifestyles that enables the development of target group adjusted goods and represents what I call the “we-economy”. At the same time they construe prefabricated identities for individuals that have subjectivating powers, as the offer patterns of identification that in the end allow the next round of self- and other-grouping. As product design and aesthetic load according to cumulated characteristics of milieus constrain the product range to options relevant for the segmented markets, individuals are forced to choose within these constraints and the implicit images and identifications. They have to subordinate to the presented categorization. This is a normalizing technique of domination mimicking freedom of choice. As a target corridor for decisions is offered, free choice is suggested - but only within the offered constraints. At the first view this seems to be normal in liberal markets. But this

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<sup>4</sup> A survey conducted in Germany in 2005 to analyze what the researchers called postmodern social character underlines the importance of image-loaded products for the construction of identities and expression of the self. Even more interesting is the overlapping of postmodern social milieus and the postmodern personality that has been measured in this survey. These results underline the complex interaction of power techniques, as they seem to have captured main parts of techniques of the self (see Frankenberger 2007 and Frankenberger / Meyer 2008)

case gains importance through the formerly unknown dimension of linkage between products and images that is crucial for lifestyle and identity formation. In Foucault's words, techniques of domination referring to lifestyle constitute a new variation of biopolitics. The totalizing aspect of subjectivation allows action upon the action of groups, as it produces knowledge about composition, size and dynamics of social milieus. In addition, typical needs, wishes, values and attitudes are as well analyzed as patterns of life conduct and relationships. Milieus thus constitute more or less exactly calculable and predictable social conjunctions within the population. If we believe in trend research, this is also true for future developments. In the area of consumer behavior, robust predictions can be made concerning so called disruptive trends in market research. This in turn is used to integrate these trends in models of signification and production.

### **Techniques of the self**

On the individualizing side, techniques of the self attach to the terms lifestyle and milieu. They work analogous to the techniques of domination. In a first step, individuals locate themselves in the social space and distinguish themselves from other individuals. The signification of lifestyles initiates individual processes of examination and calibration. They lead individuals to reflect, envision and expatiate their own lifestyle. Due to the conscious disputation of own and other lifestyles, mechanisms of social referencing lead individuals to locate and define themselves in relation to offered lifestyle-concepts. This causes more or less conscious but inevitable processes of self- and lifestyle-evaluation. On the basis of individual self-concepts and social referencing, individuals adjust and probably redefine the own lifestyle in relation to the lifestyles offered and presented by techniques of signification. Lifestyle provides the blueprints of archetypes and anti-archetypes of the "I-Economy": Who am I, which lifestyle do I have and which one do I want to have? More or less conscious techniques of self-domination regarding lifestyle are implemented and thus reflected mainly in consumption.

As the question of individual lifestyles implies the question of what group (of lifestyles) does an individual want to belong to, in a second step individuals are forced to choose social affiliations or "conjunctions". This may lead to takeovers of new and other elements of lifestyle. This in turn implements new processes of self-evaluation, self-disciplinary action, and adaptation to certain archetypes of lifestyle. Or it may lead to contradictory, unruly reactions that could have backlashes on the whole model of lifestyle, as they may create new kinds of lifestyle. Due to the complex feedback mechanisms of the governmentality of lifestyle, these new trends and life-

styles can be immediately integrated into the political rationality by techniques of signification<sup>5</sup>.

Archetypes of lifestyle are not necessarily communicated abstractly through science, but also and primarily through the market and they are adopted by the individual. Aesthetically charged products play a crucial role in this process, as brands always suggest identities and images. As Ullrich (2006, 35) argues, brands are the focal points of qualities expected from things in general. Brands thus are a kind of elite of things as they constitute a group of semantically loaded objects that evoke excitement. They can be used to express emotions, to self-assure, to sharpen individual profiles. In other words, they constitute a technology of the self that enables individuals to create their own identity and thus unfolds an individualizing effect of social distinction. But at the same time a totalizing effect of social conjunction is implemented through social referencing. In this context, brands and products become crucial elements of identity engineering through the aesthetics of everyday life and constitute a core factor of postmodern bio-politics, because individuals constitute themselves as more or less calculable units in an alleged pluralistic and individualized society through the market driven self-location within models of lifestyle and social milieus. In this way, techniques of the self foster the postmodern variation of social cohesion.

### **Techniques of production**

The governmentality of lifestyle also creates new forms of production: products can be produced to fit exactly to target groups with a comparatively small risk. And immaterial products, e.g. advertisement, can produce additional market opportunities, if the purchase of the products is associated with the purchase of lifestyle-attributes, as purchase decisions largely rely on the comparison of images of brands. This leads product and image designer to a humanization of brands that facilitates the identification with the brand. This is a concise summary of the cumulative effects of techniques of subjectivation and domination within the governmentality of lifestyle. On the basis of these effects, specific techniques of production of sense and image emerge to allow an “added value economy” of goods and services that produces and sells images and identities that in turn are injected into the process of governmentalization of lifestyle.

### **The governmentality of lifestyle - a process model**

The four techniques of power together form a circular, self-referencing complex of power/knowledge that would not work without one of the techniques. This does not mean that instruments within the techniques are unchangeable. Au contraire, they

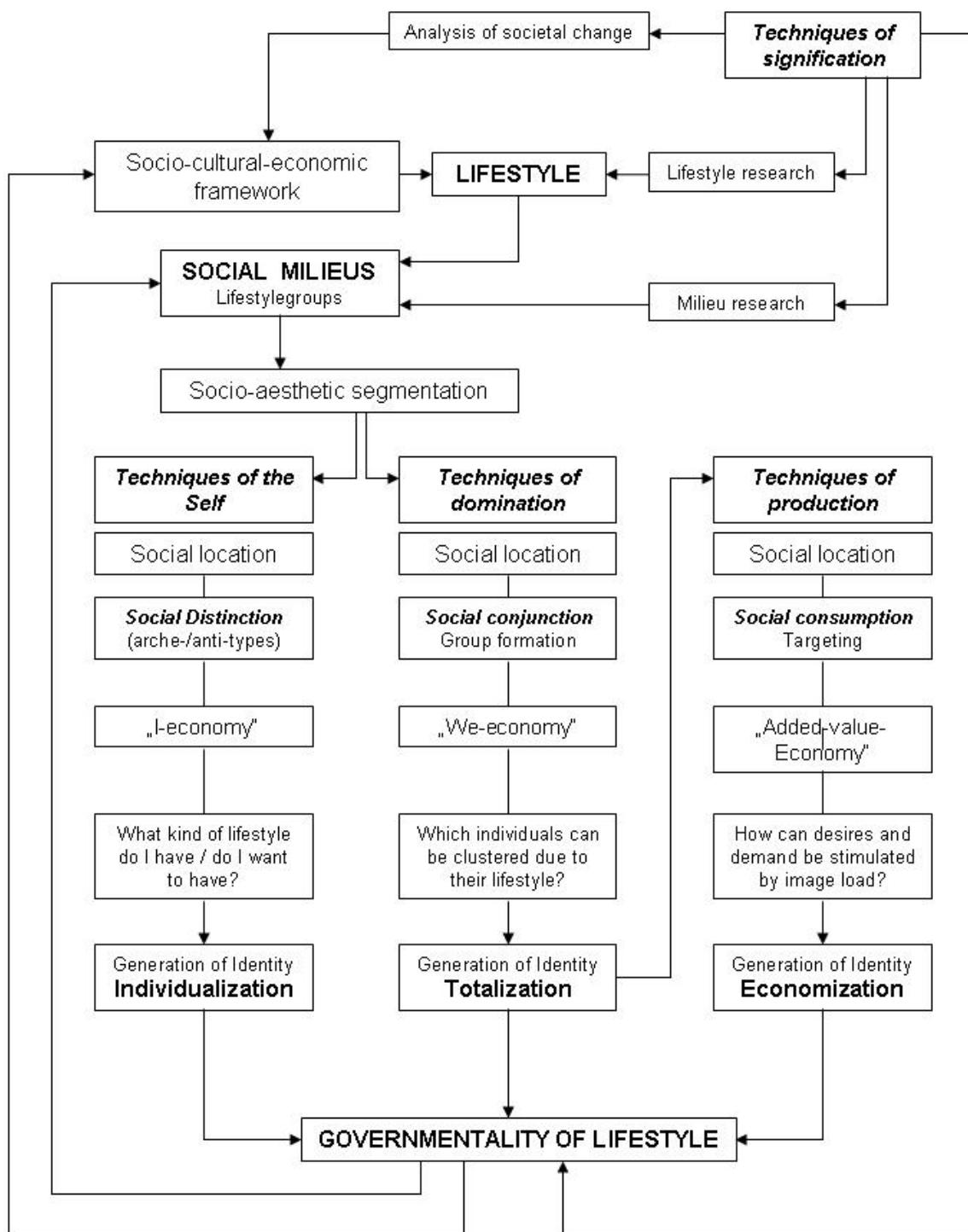
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<sup>5</sup> One of these techniques is trend scouting conducted by major producers of image-added goods. Thus, only the refusal of consumption offers a secure way out of this governmentality, that would impose the power techniques with real thrill - but how possible?

are permanently readjusting to actual conditions. From a social scientists point of view, the starting point is the phenomenology of societal change that evokes the analysis and signification of this change, and probably makes necessary the creation of new technologies of signification. Within the governmentality of lifestyle these are the technologies lifestyle and milieu research that enable the signification of socio-aesthetic segmentation of societies. Once being signified, these changes are subject of power analysis, i.e. techniques of controlling the new phenomena emerge. As lifestyle and milieus are the central categories, techniques of domination and techniques of the self are docking on these phenomena. Techniques of domination locate individuals within social conjunctions to create a “we-economy” of totalization. Techniques of the self in turn evoke an “I-economy” of individualization and self-location in one of the social conjunctions offered by techniques of signification. Techniques of production then refer to the totalized and self located individual to produce added-value through the load of images on products that in turn again serve for means of totalization and individualization. Being re-linked to socio-cultural, aesthetic and economic framework of society through various feedback loops, the complex of power/knowledge forms what I call the governmentality of lifestyle and that constitutes the political rationality of consumer society. It aims to close the gap of political research inter-individual and inter-group power relations that emerged with the unfolding of the neoliberal paradigm and consumer society.

For example, the totalizing and individualizing effects of the interaction of techniques of the self and techniques of domination on individuals can be shown within this complex. This process generates subjects in a Foucaultian sense, that are subordinated to techniques of signification and domination through control and dependence (Foucault 1999,166). Due to the effects of these techniques, a process of ideational realization and self-awareness of the individual lifestyle and identity is embedded in cognitive processes of the individuals.

Diagram 1: the governmentality of lifestyle - a process model



Beyond that, circular processes of the interaction of all four techniques causing a further stabilization and sophistication of the governmentality of lifestyle can be described: The more research is done in the area of lifestyle, the more the predictions and significations of this research will be fulfilled. Societies adjust to the offered signification through the processes of supply and demand of images and identities, as there are hardly any goods sold without the added value of image. The other way round, this process of signification enables the integration of new lifestyles that, by chance, could emerge. The feedback-loops of the techniques can be proved easily: if they didn't exist, there would not have been any change, not to mention the well analyzed becoming, growth and shrinking of social milieus.

Techniques of the self can lead individuals to change their lifestyle over time and to affiliate another social milieu. Also, new technological developments as digitalization and informatization can cause changes in lifestyles, attitudes, value orientations and behavior and thus new lifestyles and milieus can emerge. As the case may be old milieus die out. Both, the emergence and disappearance of milieus, are relevant for bio-politics, as they indicate substantial change in the population. One also can assume that specialized technologies of production are closely linked to the economic conditions of a society.

Together with many other aspects a highly developed and complex system of differentiations exists within the framework of the governmentality of lifestyle that allows high levels of rationalizations of acting upon others' action and to constrain areas of contingency within the postmodern lifestyle economy.

The rationalization is expressed in the design of markets, images, brands and products and therefore is a means of selling. As a result, technologies of domination and related phenomena of power are subject to the accumulation of profits. But according to the neoliberal logic of governmentality, also techniques of the self and related phenomena can be traced back to profits: As lifestyle is at minimum partly open to conscious decisions, individuals will add considerations of profit concerning image, identity, and acceptance. As conscious decisions can be attributed to the individual and are supposed to be rational, the governmentality of lifestyle ties in with the neoliberal logic of individual responsibility and the rationality of "self-entrepreneurship" (Opitz 2004): By means of lifestyle, an aesthetic self-entrepreneurship is established: The orchestration and fabrication of the self.

## CONCLUSION

What does this have to do with politics, political science and political psychology? To use a *bonmot*, all is political but the political. To be a bit more sophisticated, one can say that we are witnessing a fundamental change of the logic of government in post-

modern consumer societies. As the postmodern change produces contingency, plurality and incommensurability, these processes have to be represented adequately in an analysis of power and society, as power shifts away from states, and governmental rationalities re-adjust within the framework of neoliberal governmentality<sup>6</sup>.

The governmentality of lifestyle is closely linked with the above mentioned genuinely economic neoliberal rationality of government that Foucault analyzed extensively (Foucault 2007; 2008). According to this analysis, the nation-state is a secondary phenomenon, a phenotype of a certain kind of governmentality. It is by no means universal and no autonomous source of power, and it is a flexible framework of transactions forming and changing the arenas of finance, investment, decision-making, forms and types of control and domination as well as the relationship between local powers and central authorities. This implies a constructivist and more or less versatile nature of the state that finds itself in a constant condition of transformation and is reduced to an effect of a regime of multiplied governmentality (Foucault 2000b, 70). In other words, the state once fitted in the rationality of power, but now becomes outdated and is endangered to be replaced by something else, bit by bit. The focus of analyzing the state therefore has to be drawn on effects of social and economic techniques of power on the state and state action. In short, the way techniques of power (re-)form the state have to be analyzed<sup>7</sup>. It is not really puzzling that especially the progressive social milieus are targets, subject and object of neoliberal risk-calculations and the logic of self-responsibility. These groups of individuals are socialized under neoliberal conditions and have internalized the relevant technologies of the self and that are the avant-gardes of social change. These individuals and groups are possibly not submitting to techniques of domination. Exhausting postmodern freedoms they not only generate trends in consumption but also in politics.

Under these circumstances, the postulate of postmodern freedom gains a new perspective as one should not forget about the on-lasting and even expanding rationalities of governing that Foucault describes with the terms norm and discipline. Under postmodern conditions, they are complemented by dispositives of security and risk

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<sup>6</sup> In the field of “classical” political science this means that techniques and rationalities of governing have to be signified. Foucault is right, when he argues that social science can not be divided from the emergence of new political rationalities and individuals becoming objects of sciences is not caused by ideology but by the existence of political technologies that were developed within societies (Foucault 2005c, 1015) Instruments of social research allow to capture, systematize, and categorize plurality and fragmentation in contemporary societies. For bio-politics it is crucial to keep track of complex social structures, as this is the only way to create or adjust technologies of power in order to establish or maintain control.

<sup>7</sup> As, among others, milieu research denominates relevant, measurable social entities and analyzes milieu patterns in an international perspective, it points at the transcendence of socio-aesthetic and cultural boundaries between postmodern societies, that lead to globalized shift of power relations beyond nation states. This implies the necessity for political science to overcome the limits of the political system, as the political system is part of structures formed by an economy of signs and space that fulfills certain functions. As these functions can no more be fulfilled, structures have to change.

that produce new regulations using the mimicry of freedom while implementing new constraints with the affixed label of self-responsibility. As subjectivism, self-definition and identity engineering overlap, they form the slogan “I am me” as a suggorate and formula of totalization of postmodern subjects. By defining the own identity and self the individual becomes responsible for the self and has to provide for risks. Taken together the postulated postmodern freedom of the conduct of life is no more a contingent field of “anything goes” of postmodern subjectivism, but rather an “anything goes but” of neoliberal normalization, as a field of economically or politically accepted lifestyles is conceptualized in which individuals have to locate themselves.

This makes us understand why Foucault did not start from state and stateness while investigating political rationalities, when he argues that the integration of the individual in a collective or totality results from the steady correlation between growing individualization and the strengthening of just this totality (Foucault 2005c, 1015). Thus a postmodern governmental syndrome emerges.

## LITERATURE

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