

The Power of Identity Documents

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I hereby declare and assure that I, Roman Pogrebnyak, have drafted this thesis independently, that no other sources and/or means other than those mentioned have been used and that the passages of which the text content or meaning originates in other works - including electronic media - have been identified and the sources clearly stated.

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Abstract:

The passport is both very intimate to its bearer and highly integrated into the state's bureaucratic apparatus. This combination of intimate connection and integration into the working of state bureaucracy makes passports highly valuable for the development and functioning of the modern state. Simultaneously, passports have a significant influence on their bearers. Through analyzing passports and their history, the present thesis examines, from the perspective of power, the broad category of objects to which passports and, for instance, ID cards belong. The conceptualization of the broad category of objects allows for analyzing new phenomena. This will be demonstrated by applying the conceptualization to the recent case of digitalization of passports.

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Introduction

This thesis starts with the intuition coming from my personal experiences with my Ukrainian identity card.¹ Somehow, both the identity card, used for identification of the person within the issuing country, and the passport, used for international identification, create a personal connection with the bearer. Despite being a document such as myriad other documents, from the university diploma to the health insurance certificate, the identity card peculiarly engages with its bearer, and so does the passport. First, they are paradoxically both extremely personified, containing information about the person and their body, and generalized in a universal manner; an absolute majority of human beings on planet Earth have an identity document integrated into the planetary system of identification. Indeed, almost everywhere, the identity card is mandatory to possess (Bennet and Lyon 2008, 5 – 9).

However, the identity card and the passport are not only a weird combination of personification and generalization. More importantly, they are portable, ever-carriable objects that give their bearers access to various interactions with state institutions through the personal information they contain. We use them on a permanent basis as they provide access to state services, interstate mobility, and to our juridical bodies. Vice versa, they allow the state to grasp ever-mobile people and comfortably process them within the machine of modern bureaucracy. Therefore, these documents play a significant role in the way power is exercised in modernity.

To analyze the development and the workings of power, especially state power, in modernity, we need a sophisticated theoretical framework. There are many varying frameworks (Lukes 2005; Giddens 1984; Newman 2001; Barry 1989; Murdoch and Marsden 1995), but to analyze the ways power works in mundane situations and contexts, the one developed by Michel Foucault is perfect to use.

Indeed, Foucault's framework allows us to view power as the relationship between people constantly occurring during their lives. For Foucault, power is "action upon the actions of others" (Foucault 1982, 790). In this sense, the exercise of power is "a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions..., always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action" (ibid., 789).

Hence, power is constantly exercised in numerous situations (from the doctor's cabinet to the prison) by actors varying from the state bureaucracy to ordinary

¹ Borrowing from the Soviet tradition, we call it the "internal passport."

persons making others do something for them.

As the passport is exactly the object that works on many levels and in a variety of situations, for this thesis, I will use the Foucauldian notion of power. Looking through the lenses of this notion of power, it is not hard to acknowledge that the portable, life-important document issued by the state and necessary to interact both with the state and with non-state actors is an object providing the state and other actors using it with many great opportunities to act upon the actions of others.

I assume the three main distinguishing characteristics of identity cards, passports, and similar identity documents. First is their portability combined with the constant need to carry them to have access to various, primarily state-provided, services (and hence the fact that we carry these objects with us incredibly often). Second is their vivid attachment to the physical body of the person, both in the way we use them and in the information they contain. Third is their incredible integration into the workings of state power in modernity and into the modern state's bureaucratic apparatus.

This combination of characteristics, I assume, makes such objects uniquely instrumental due to the way they shape everyday interactions, life stories, decisions, and self-perceptions of modern people. Indeed, the power of these objects is so immense that they can even become crucial for facilitating racial and other types of discrimination (Mongia 1999; Fussel 2004) and genocide (Stanton 2009; Fussel 2004). Therefore, it is valuable to have a deeper understanding of these objects as, via them being so instrumental in the facilitation of power exercise in modernity, especially by the state apparatus(es), they can also be incredibly dangerous.

These characteristics are not unique to identity cards and passports only but cover a broader group of identity documents and related means of identification. For instance, driver's licenses and recent vaccination passports share these traits. Recently, the progress in the sphere of digital technologies allowed for the creation of digital identification documents and platforms providing access to state services, from rather simple digital ID cards (Arora 2008) to comprehensive digital systems (Goede 2019) and even so-called "state in smartphone" (Tretiakova and Fomicheva 2020; Bateson 2021) projects. As I will further argue, this digitalization significantly increases the power of identity documents such as the passport, making demands for a deeper understanding of them even more significant in our century.

In this thesis, I will primarily focus on passports as there is a vast existing literature covering them. Indeed, passports were analyzed as a historical phenomenon (Lloyd 2003; Torpey 2018), as the objects essential for the emergence and flourishing of the modern state (Torpey 2018), as crucial for the development of the modern novel (Gulddal 2015), as means of creating the police

state (Chamayou 2013), and as objects of design and politics (Keshavarz 2016; Keshavarz 2019). Therefore, I will concentrate my analysis of identity documents on passports.

Despite such broad coverage of passports, there were no attempts to comprehensively address the passport as an object uniquely instrumental for the workings of power in modernity. Such a comprehensive analysis would require an inquiry combining the history of passports, their relationship to the state, their relationship to their bearers and other people, and the development of society in modernity. For this reason, in this thesis, I am going to combine these perspectives to analyze passports and subsequently answer the research question: “How can we characterize the category of objects that includes identity documents such as the passport from the perspective of power?”

For this matter, the thesis is divided into three sections. In the first section, I will introduce a general framework I used to analyze passports, primarily based on Michel Foucault’s conceptual framework.

In the second section, I will dive deeper into the passport question. I will first discuss some concepts needed to better understand the passport’s role in the development of the modern state to further proceed to discuss passports’ history. Then, using the theory and the analysis of the passport’s history, I will further look at them from three different perspectives covering the usage of passports: person-to-state, person-to-themselves, and person-to-person.

In the third section, I will create a more general understanding of the category of objects that includes passports using the previous analysis as a fundament. To show how the distinguishing of this general category is helpful in the analysis of objects other than the passport, I will demonstrate the benefits of such generalization by applying it to the contemporary phenomenon of passports’ digitalization.

To be more precise, distinguishing the broad category will allow me to analyze the recent phenomenon of combining gadgets such as the smartphone and identity documents that, I will claim, makes identity documents and similar objects even more powerful than before. Thus, I will demonstrate that the understanding of identity documents from the perspective of power that I will develop in this thesis is instrumental for the analysis of the development of these and similar objects in the twenty-first century.

Before concluding my thesis, I will stress the dangers that unique characteristics of this category of objects pose to society, be it a paper passport or a digital one.

1. The Theoretical Framework

In my analysis of passports, I will engage with various authors and theories, but the main inspiration is Michel Foucault and his works on power. In this section, I will outline the *general* theoretical framework² instrumental in analyzing the workings of power. For this, I will discuss several concepts from Foucault and authors who took inspiration from him. I will outline the historical evolution of society in modernity in the relation to these concepts. In doing this, I will especially concentrate on the changes that occurred at the end of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This framework will serve as a lens through which I will first interpret the history and the main characteristics of the passport to further conceptualize the broad category of objects to which the passport belongs

1.1. Michel Foucault and Power

Power was one of the central topics researched by Michel Foucault. In contemporary philosophical discourse, Foucault and power became so connected that one can even say that he is “perhaps best known as a theorist of power” (Taylor 2011, 41). Indeed, he studied power in its many forms throughout almost all of his career, developing plenty of concepts and theoretical schemes. For this thesis, I will use extensively the ideas first outlined by him in the 1976 book *History of Sexuality* (vol.1) and later developed and revised by the philosopher until his death in 1984.

However, as Foucault’s intellectual legacy is quite fragmented, especially after his 1975 work *Discipline and Punish* (Johnson 2014, 10), I must first discuss and clarify the notions of *sovereign power* and *biopower* that can be roughly called the modes of power that Foucault discusses.

For Foucault, the way power is exercised is not a constant notion but an overflow from one form into another. I propose addressing his conceptualizations

² I emphasize the *general* here as I will also introduce some more theoretical concepts at the beginning of the next section. In the current section, I will discuss the broad theoretical framework related to Foucault’s conceptualizations of power and some other theorists discussing biopower. In contrast, at the beginning of the next section, I will address the theory developed by John Torpey precisely for analyzing passports. As a result, the next section comprehensively addresses passports starting with theory directly related to them and continuing with their history and their characteristics.

of the flow from one paradigm mode of exercising power to another in the historical order of their existence. So, let us start with sovereign power.

1.2. The Modes of Power

Foucault contends that one of the major features of the times roughly before the end of the seventeenth century was the dominance of sovereign power, which is the ability to “take life or let live” (Foucault 1978, 136; Taylor 2011, 43 – 44). Then, sovereign power was wielded at the individual level as a means of deduction: the ruler's right to seize “things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself” (Deleuze 1992, 3). As Deleuze puts it, the functions of the societies of sovereignty were “to tax rather than to organize production, to rule on death rather than administering life” (ibid.). This mode of power was dominant in Western society up until the end of the seventeenth century (Taylor 2011, 44) when the new mode, biopower, entered the stage.

With biopower, the sovereign power's formula is turned upside down as this is the power to “*foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death” (Foucault 1978, 138; emphasis from the original). In this transformation, the deduction function became merely one of the forms of power among others. As Foucault argues, this new mode of power was “working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them” (ibid., 136).

It is important here to note that while discussing the exercise of biopower, we discuss what Foucault calls government, that is, “the conduct of conduct’... a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons” (Gordon 1991, 2). That is, to govern means to structure and shape the other's action field (Lemke 2002, 52); hence, the information about the others is needed to govern. The many ways one can conduct the conduct of others are not fixed but rather constantly changing with the evolution of society following the elusive logic of power.

Similar to this elusive logic of power, the Foucauldian concept of biopower is, same as many other Foucault's terms, an ambiguous and changing one. At some points, Foucault distinguishes it from disciplinary power, although he stresses their close interconnection; at other points, he rather views biopower as an umbrella term that includes disciplinary power into it (Taylor 2011, 44 – 45).

For this thesis, I am going to engage with the understanding of biopower as an

umbrella term encompassing all forms of power over life as outlined in Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1978). There, Foucault distinguishes between two forms or technologies of exercising this mode power, *anatomo-politics*, which can be roughly corresponded with disciplinary power (Taylor 2011, 44 – 46), and *biopolitics*. The former became being exercised on a scale massive enough to be indicated and examined by researchers somewhat earlier than the latter (ibid., 44). However, after the emergence of biopolitics closer to the end of the eighteenth century, these forms, in the infinite tango around bodies of the populace, mutually complemented each other (Foucault 2003, 249). I will address these two forms in the respective order.

1.3. Anatomo-Politics and the Discipline

The first form, “centered on the body as a machine” (Foucault 1978, 139), is *anatomo-politics*. This form of power targets individual bodies. Anatomo-politics concentrates on creating a productive, docile, useful body integrated into the then-only-starting-to-rise industrial society (ibid.). From an anatomo-political perspective, “the body became a machine for the maximization of economic productivity” (Mendieta 2014, 40). I will return to this idea of maximizing economic utility when discussing the flow and control of labor facilitated through the passport.

For now, it is important to stress that anatomo-politics, primarily exercised by new emerging disciplinary state institutions such as the professional army and the state school system, is closely tied to the notion of disciplinary society. Anatomo-politics is, at least visibly, perhaps the main *modus operandi* of disciplinary society. Indeed, one can argue that anatomo-politics and disciplinary power are the two names for one phenomenon (Taylor 2011, 46). So, it is now the time to discuss disciplinary power as it was first outlined by Foucault in his 1975 book *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1995).

Discipline and Punish examines changes in punishment from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. In this book, the figure of the criminal, who was once tortured on the scaffold for their crimes but now became imprisoned, represents the transition from sovereign power to disciplinary power. Moreover, the disciplinary techniques assembled against the criminal are not limited to the prison institution; they are dispersed throughout the social body (Foucault 1995, 211).

Prison disciplinary techniques are akin to those used by various state institutions and non-state organizations such as factories. As Foucault asks at one point, “Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?” (Foucault 1995, 228). The defining characteristics here are constant surveillance of an enclosed territory and constant normalization of a productive population.

For constant surveillance and normalization of masses and even relatively small groups of people, a certain way to document and grasp people and their actions is essential. As this thesis’ primal focus is on the passport, it is important to note that intelligibility is crucial for governing, that is, for the conduct of conduct. As Rose argues, it is “possible to govern only within a certain regime of intelligibility” (Rose 1999, 28).

Indeed, it is hard to imagine governing and disciplining exercised by, for instance, the state bureaucratic apparatus on the grand scale without this state being able to know the ever-changing populace and to fix it somehow. According to Foucault, the process of *examination*, one of the necessary steps in exercising disciplinary power, situates individuals “in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them” (Foucault 1995, 189). For him, “‘power of writing’ was constituted as an essential part in the mechanisms of discipline” (ibid.). Relating it to the passport and more broadly to identity documents and identification systems, one cannot hesitate to cite Caplan and Torpey: “universal systems of identification are unthinkable without mass literacy and an official culture of written records” (Caplan and Torpey 2001, 1 – 2). It is by writing and through writing that one creates and sustains the conditions necessary for disciplinary power to thrive throughout society.

Foucault famously uses Jeremy Bentham's proposal of an ideal prison, the Panopticon, to demonstrate the workings of disciplinary power in society. The proposed structure is a rotunda with an inspection house in the center where there is a view of all cells situated in the rotunda's walls. The institution's guard or manager can observe the inmates from the center. Although it is physically impossible for a single guard to observe all the inmates' cells at the same time, the fact that the inmates do not know when they are being watched motivates them to act as if they are always being watched. As a result, the inmates are forced to regulate their own behavior as if the guard is watching.

Although it can be perceived as just a plan for a prison, Bentham envisioned the basic plan as equally applicable to hospitals, schools, sanatoriums, and asylums. In one of his lectures, Foucault argues that “Bentham will propose that the Panopticon should be the formula for the whole of government, saying that the

Panopticon is the very formula of liberal government” (Foucault 2008, 67). Based on this, Foucault would later develop the notion of *panopticism* as a power paradigm of modern liberal society:

Panopticism is one of the characteristic traits of our society. It’s a type of power that is applied to individuals in the form of continuous individual supervision, in the form of control, punishment, and compensation, and in the form of correction, that is, the molding and transformation of individuals in terms of certain norms. This threefold aspect of panopticism – surveillance, control, correction – seems to be a fundamental and characteristic dimension of the power relations that exist in our society. (Foucault 2000, 70)

So, in the workings of disciplinary power, the individual body is surveyed and controlled through various apparatuses, institutions, rules, and material conditions, thus rendering it useful for the modern, undoubtedly capitalist, society. When the focus shifts from the individual body and discipline to the population as a whole and to the regulation of this population, *biopolitics* enters the stage.

1.4. Biopolitics and the Regulation

According to Foucault, biopolitics is a new non-disciplinary technology of power that does not exclude the disciplinary technology but superimposes it by integrating into it and employing “it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques” (Foucault 2003, 242). So, two technologies operate simultaneously yet on two distinct levels: discipline is individualizing, while biopolitics is massifying.

Whereas anatomo-politics and the disciplinary institutions concentrate on body-as-machine, biopolitics focuses on “species body,” that is, “the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary” (Foucault 1978, 139).

Hence, what characterizes biopolitics is the mass-focused approach, the population-centered view that does not deal with concrete bodies or arrangements

of bodies. Instead, it deals with aggregates and uses the knowledge about the biological conditions and characteristics of a large number of persons. Thus, as a result, it creates the need for a highly developed bureaucratic apparatus armed with mechanisms of not only surveillance but, primarily, regulation and risk calculation. The supervision and calculation of characteristics of the population were “effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population” (Foucault 1978, 139).

Biopolitics is no longer concerned with the body but with living man as species, “a multiplicity of men” forming “a global mass affected by overall processes characteristic of life” (Foucault 2003, 242 – 243). Due to the scale on which biopolitics operates that necessitates the usage of grandiose bureaucratic and other networks, biopolitics can be viewed as exercised predominantly by the state (Taylor 2011, 45 – 46).

One such network collecting and processing seemingly infinite amounts of information about bodies is the state-facilitated passport system, similar to other identity document processing systems. However, with technological development and the transformation of capitalist society, the biopolitical potential of non-state actors becomes more evident (Cheney-Lippold 2011). Hence, I now propose discussing this transformation.

1.5. The Society of Control and its Technologies

To this point, I was addressing the changes that occurred in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. However, after World War II, there was a shift in the ways power was exercised as the *society of control* started to emerge (Deleuze 1992).

Unfortunately, the early death of Foucault did not allow him to proceed with deepening our understanding of the hybrid nature of power and comprehensively conceptualize the shift that was occurring after WWII. This shift, it seems, became vivid enough to be conceptualized only in the late twentieth century. As Gilles Deleuze puts it, “in their turn, the disciplines underwent a crisis to the benefit of new forces that were gradually instituted and which accelerated after World War II: a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we had ceased to be” (Deleuze 1992, 3).

The notion of control society was first brought up by Deleuze in 1992 and later developed by various thinkers. The most prominent of these thinkers are, perhaps, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, whose 2000 book *Empire* became phenomenally popular and made its way far outside academia (Bull 2001).

The transition from disciplinary to control society marks a fundamental shift from institutionalized forms of power exercise to rhizomatic networks of control extending far beyond explicit disciplinary deployments of power to much more dynamic, fluid, and implicit forms (Hardt and Negri 2000, 22 – 25). Hence, in this new epoch, the number of actors that exercise power and of ways in which it is exercised is ever-increasing compared to the previous epoch; simultaneously, these actors and their actions are significantly less visible and tangible.

One should not, however, perceive the transformation that took place in the late twentieth century as totally leaving disciplinary power behind. The change from one paradigm to another should not be viewed as occurring rapidly but rather as a flow, as an elusive process that shifts the whole machinery of society happening at different paces on different levels and in different areas. The different technologies of power co-exist in society. Foucault himself acknowledges it when discussing the two different yet co-existing power exercise schemes of “body-organism-discipline institutions” and “population-biological processes-regulatory mechanisms-State” (Foucault 2003, 250). Thus, same as in the case of the deduction function of sovereign power, the disciplinary, anatomo-political methods and practices are still widespread across society but are operating in the new, rhizomatic field of market logics-governed multiplicities.

Undoubtably, the articulation of the society of control by theorists in the late twentieth century is linked to the rise of neoliberalism that Foucault anticipated in his lecture series titled *The Birth of Biopolitics* (Foucault 2008). Neoliberalism made the society of control visible. According to David Harvey, in the neoliberal paradigm, it is understood that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey 2005, 2). As a result, we can observe the rise of a more consumption-oriented personal identity and the proliferation of private companies now providing services in areas previously controlled by the state, such as medicine and public transportation.

Reminding Hardt and Negri’s conceptualization of the society of control, Foucault argued that power relations in this new epoch are defined by a “multiplicity of points of view” and “non-totalizable multiplicity of economic subjects” (Foucault 2008, 282). As a result, “a new hybrid consumer-citizen is emerging” blurring the borders between state and private sectors (Ajana 2013, 11). Thus, neoliberal marketization disperses power in society. It makes power more rhizomatic and flexible and, paradoxically, through openness, makes the control increasingly more effective (Nealon 2014, 85).

The neoliberal society of control became especially visible in the twenty-first century. The combination and mass implementation of several new technologies, particularly the Internet, the smartphone,³ and new biometrics technologies, exacerbated the rhizomatic logic of this new epoch. In the world conquered by the Internet, one cannot resist living a part of their lives virtually. The smartphone became the primal instrument providing access to virtual life. Additionally, through the combination of characteristics reminding those of the passport, which I will discuss further, this portable device becomes a constant attachment to one's life and builds a very strong intimate connection with its bearer.

With biometrics of various kinds, the attachment of these portable objects to an individual's body is only enhanced. Now, the absolute majority of smartphones include biometrics (Sava 2022), thus creating a peculiar world of constant biological information collection, sharing, and analysis on a level impossible to imagine for a paper object such as a passport. In fact, the proliferation of self-tracking and other techniques of self-empowerment, surely belonging to the neoliberal logic of self-governance/management (Ajana 2017), came to the point when one can claim that "these data/self-quantifications become a self-knowledge and a general framework in which people situate themselves and understand their behavior" (Ristic and Marinkovic 2019, 537).

Perhaps, the most significant characteristic of smartphones from the point of view of biopower is that through them, IT companies engage in the kind of activity previously much more exclusive for the state. Of course, it is evident that smartphones discipline the body; they subordinate the person to certain sets of actions and rules, thus facilitating the conduct of conduct. Smartphones help people engage in market activity exactly in the open, voluntary manner characteristic of the society of control.

However, the biopolitical aspect is no less prominent here as anatomo-political. Indeed, smartphones give companies the ability to provide access to services, grasp the population, collect knowledge, and shape lives on a massive scale that other private enterprises never imagined, both by the depth of their connection to users, their flexibility, their analytic potential, and by the number of people using them.

This makes IT companies, and virtual services-zones they provide access to, a paradigmatic example of what Deleuze argued about the new type of capitalism, not the one of "production" but the one of "marketing" (Deleuze 1992, 5 – 6). According to Deleuze, this new type of capitalism becomes a "soul" of the corporation that now does not depend on institutions as the fabric did "and instead

³ And other portable devices that connect people to the Internet.

of relying on various environments of enclosure, creates and fosters an open environment” (Petrina 2021, 223) where control is “free-floating” (Deleuze 1992, 6). Thus, in the new epoch, private companies represented by the new burgeoning IT sector became seemingly intertwined with the state in their functions and their powers.

However, there is still a significant difference between the private company-produced smartphone and, for instance, the identity document issued by the state. Despite the changes in society described by Deleuze and others, the state is an institution incomparably more potent than any IT company when it comes to the ways states can use the information to shape people’s actions.

By virtue of the colossal modern bureaucratic apparatus integrated into the international system built around nation-states and by virtue of people’s belief in the state, the state is still a centralized structure that has a relative monopoly on violence. It has the ability to decide on giving access to multiple non-virtual zones and services. And it has the level of control over the population that no company, not even Amazon and Apple, has at the moment. As I will show further, the contemporary state does not let the IT sector to simply retake the state's functions but instead utilizes the IT sector's potential to create further novel forms of control over the population, fitting the demands of the new century.

The history of the passport, as I will discuss in the next section, takes place simultaneously with both paradigmatic power shifts that I addressed in this section. The passport instrumentally serves the modern state by disciplining individual bodies, helping regulate the flow of masses, and collecting the information essential for biopolitics to thrive. As I will show, the passport evolved with society and was hardly dispensable in the facilitation of society’s, and especially the state’s modern evolution. Let us now examine this evolution.

2. The Passport

In this section, I will thoroughly address the phenomenon of the passport. As the history of the passport is closely linked to the development of the modern state, I will start by discussing some concepts from John Torpey’s seminal historical work on passports (Torpey 2018). These concepts directly developed for analyzing passports, combined with the more general framework that I outlined in the previous section, are necessary to build a comprehensive picture of the passport's history. After discussing Torpey’s ideas, I will demonstrate the historical evolution of the passport and its relation to the simultaneous evolution

of society and power within society.

The demonstration of the historical co-evolution of passports and the modern state is important to outline as it not only allows us to distinguish the characteristics of the passport but also to see the enormous power these objects bear through their characteristics. Based on the findings from this discussion, I will conceptualize the main characteristics of the passport dividing this conceptualization into three categories: (i) the way it facilitates the workings of the modern state and interactions of states with their citizens, (ii) the way it influences bearer's life and self-perception, (iii) and the way it influences intrapersonal relationships.

2.1. Embracing the Population

In the discussion of the passport and its history, I rely primarily on John Torpey. In his brilliant 2000 book *The Invention of the Passport*, he provides a highly detailed account of both the history of the phenomenon and the way it worked to help the modern state come into being. In this book, Torpey analyses the history of the passport primarily from the juridical perspective, but he incorporates it into a wider picture of the evolution of modern society and state.

His conceptualization of the workings of bureaucratic apparatus is instrumental in the analysis of the passport from the biopolitical perspective. To analyze this person-to-passport-to-state relationship further, I will use some notions Torpey developed: the concept of “*embracement*” and the metaphor of the *infrastructure* as applied to systems of institutions, rules, and practices (Torpey 2018, 13 – 14).

Embracement is the conceptual description of the process by which modern states, to use Foucault's terms, “capture and fix” (Foucault 1995, 189) their inhabitants. Torpey contrasts it with the more popular idea of “penetration” (Torpey 2018, 12). The idea of states slowly penetrating societies implies a rather fixed, deterministic, and a top-down regime where societies simply “lie prostrate beneath them” (ibid., 13). Torpey wants to move from this simplistic picture by focusing not on the general description of the process but on *how* states were able to grasp their populaces. So, he uses the metaphor of embracement to show how “in order to extract resources and implement policies, states must be in a position to locate and lay claim to people and goods” (ibid.). This process was unachievable without developing systems of mass identification and movement control. And, as Torpey puts it, it was impossible without seizing the “legitimate means of control” and nationalizing and hence monopolizing them (ibid., 8 – 12).

Torpey himself admits a kinship between his notions of embracement and Foucault's conceptualization of surveillance (Torpey 2018, 6 – 7, 13, 19). However, he criticizes Foucault for being too vague and too concentrated on disciplining institutions and not on the techniques and material objects through which they grasped and classified those they disciplined. Despite these criticisms, Torpey's notion of embracement can co-work with Foucault's framework. Embracement is a necessary part of governing and disciplining as by embracing the populace, the state renders it intelligible and thus governable and processable within the bureaucratic apparatus.

The difference between the two thinkers is not in their concepts but, as Torpey's criticisms reveal, in the scope. Torpey wants us to pay close attention to the material characteristics of the passport and the techniques of power constituting and utilizing it. The integrated system of these techniques and material objects attached to persons is what Torpey calls "the essence" of "infrastructural power" of the state (Torpey 2018, 13 – 14, 149), although I would, using less general terminology, prefer calling them *means of identification and access* essential for the modern state's development.

The outline of the history of passports, with which I will continue this section, is primarily important as a demonstration of the passport's evolution simultaneous with the development of society. Traveling through the passport's history, one can see how this tiny document emerged and changed, mirroring tectonic processes that brought anatomo-politics, biopolitics, and, ultimately, the society of control to existence.

2.2. The History of the Passport

Passport controls, although of a very different sort than those we are used to today, have existed in Europe at least since the Late Middle Ages (Torpey 2018, 22).⁴ Before the sunrise of modernity, the passport was not possessed by every individual, nor it had a standardized form. Usually, the passport was a document signed by the sovereign themselves or by another reliable authority. Via the signature, seal, or another unique sign, the passport of the time should prove that a

⁴ It is important to note here that since the very genesis of passports to our days, the effective implementation of controls highly relied on the powers of bureaucracy. Hence, one can rightly argue that with the strengthening of the state's oversight of its borders and the growth of the bureaucratic apparatus' capacity to survey citizens, the ability to mock passport laws by forging papers or simply crossing the border without them was getting less and less easy to acquire

certain concrete person for whom this document was uniquely written can pass and should be protected. So, this early passport demonstrated that this person is accredited as a reliable one by the sovereign and that this sovereign will protect this person or take revenge for anything bad that happens to them (Keshavarz 2016, 120; Keshavarz 2019, 16; Lloyd 2001, 25 – 26).

Hence, the passport was primarily the tool of ambassadors, traders, and other small, professional groups that facilitated international connections in a world that was incredibly less mobile. Indeed, it is hard to expect high international mobility in a world where peasants constitute the absolute most of the population. Here, one of the characteristics of passports that will stay with them for centuries to come is already visible: the passport allows its issuer to represent itself and to protect its inhabitants even outside their borders, thus facilitating what I will further call “distant control.”

In the case of these early passports, their connection to the sovereign power and its deduction function is prominent. Indeed, these were merely the instruments of the sovereign by which they could give the bearer the right to live in the form of authorized protection.⁵ Hence, the sovereign could deny this right at any point by claiming that, for instance, the seal is fake and therefore the document is invalid. The passport was the sovereign’s tool that helped to defend or render vulnerable their subjects far away from the sovereign’s controlled territory. The development of bureaucratic practices, simultaneous with the rise of disciplinary power, made the passport much more variable in its functions, although this deductive feature of the passport remains to our time.

A significant novelty of modernity, undoubtedly linked to the invention of the paper press and the development of bureaucracy, was the creation of the first networks of archives that changed this person-centered way of issuing and accessing passports, and the requirement to include the description of the body of the possessor: “If the previous documents were authentic because the authentic hand of the king or bishop signed the paper, then the documents of later generations were recognized as authentic only if they were matched with official registration databases and archives” (Keshavarz 2016, 120).

As Torpey points out, in the seventeenth century, passports of various forms started to become a widespread phenomenon. However, passports of these times were not (yet) aimed at surveilling the population or protecting the state from foreigners but instead were aimed at empowering the control over the movement

⁵ Or, in contrast, it could give another sovereign the right to kill the person if they do not possess the passport authorized by some other sovereign that they consider legitimate.

of the peasantry and potential recruits within a certain territory (Torpey 2018, 23 – 28).

It was the time when the rising disciplinary society was constructing its paper foundation, and passports were helpful for examining the moving populace and controlling it through the requirement to follow various procedures such as passport controls. In the case of the peasantry, passports were the tools for keeping this backbone of the agricultural society in their places (Lloyd 2001, 52). Through various movement control methods facilitated by the passport system of the time, the free flow of labor did not occur. Thus, passports helped protect the land-owning aristocracy from the dangers of the rising capitalistic market economy.

In the case of recruits, who were mainly the same peasants, the modern state, at its early stage of evolution, tried to use passports as a way of not letting its manpower flee from the draft. It was a widespread practice of the time when the notion of the nation was not even on the horizon. Thus, the discursive apparatus of coercion that later would help states during wars by giving the populations the motivation to take part in military campaigns did not exist yet.

It is very important to stress that passports of the time were, in most cases, not concerning the national or country borders but local, intrastate divisions and hence were issued primarily by local authorities (Torpey 2018 14, 24, 35). This points to another function of the passport in these times: the facilitation of movement control and oversight over unwanted groups of people. In some cases, when we speak about cities such as Paris, the unwanted were almost everyone considered poor who could settle there, thus potentially taking the workplaces from the already established city population (*ibid.*, 27; Lloyd 2001, 52). Hence, it was a protective mechanism of medieval guilds and leagues that made its way to modernity. Passports were instrumental for guilds in controlling the flow of the poor and maximizing the economic utility in the forms beneficial for these guilds.

The other significant reason to restrict access of the poor populace to cities was the need to provide poor relief. This function was previously held by religious organizations and private people but was more and more becoming the concern of local and state authorities (Torpey 2018, 10). If previously poor relief was conducted due to ideological and moral concerns, now the economic reasoning centered the stage. The economically justified desire of local authorities was to, on the one hand, improve the conditions, and hence the productivity, of the local poor and, on the other hand, to not overburden their city or area with too many unwanted inhabitants. Indeed, the local authorities were not interested in the crowding of the poor in the area as soon as they could become potentially

rebellious and become a hotbed for diseases to spread. The disciplinary power's logic guided the local authorities, and so they used the novelty of their time, the ability to issue a large number of passports and legitimize them via networks of archives, to foster life or disallow it for their benefit.

As in the case of the aristocracy fearing the fleeing of the workforce, city institutions of the time were mainly protecting the privileged status quo that was increasingly threatened by rising capitalism. Interestingly, for the same economic reasons yet coupled with racist and nationalist rhetoric, passports were introduced within the British Empire in the early twentieth century as a means of controlling the migration of Indians to other colonies, primarily to Canada (Mongia 1999, 527). Ultimately, the introduction of passports will play a significant role in creating Indian national identity and bringing the very idea of "nationality" into India (ibid., 553 – 554).

It should be noted that the intrastate focus was not always the case as, for instance, Louis XIV restricted his subjects from leaving France without possessing a passport already in 1669 (Torpey 2018, 26 – 27). Yet, as Torpey mentions, this case was rather an exception to the rule. This example is also quite important as it again demonstrates the pre-nation-state function of the passport as not the protection from foreigners but the way to restrict the flow of bodies from the country and the way of holding the state's subjects. Hence, they live and produce where the sovereign wants them to do it and how the sovereign wants. At this point, the state was primarily interested in controlling and fostering the lives of its subjects by keeping them inside the country so they could be used by the rising capitalist economy of the time.

The other unwanted group of people was all those who then would be called vagabonds, ex-convicts (think of Hugo's *Les Misérables* here), and all other groups deemed unreliable due to their nomadic lifestyle (Torpey 2018, 22; Keshavarz 2019, 16). Here, the reasoning was familiar to contemporary populations of Middle Eastern countries where part of the population are Bedouins: the state and the local authorities felt, increasingly with time, the threat from the population that is not sedentary and hence, just like vagabonds of the past, cannot be constantly surveyed (Cole 2003, 241 – 242).

Moreover, in a time when modern police and detection techniques were at least in the embryonic state, the idea that a certain person could simply leave the city or the region was especially problematic for the authorities. Therefore, to survey and restrict the movement of the population, the state needs some instruments to identify and trace its inhabitants, and identity documents were very helpful for that purpose.

Summing up, from early modernity to the eighteenth century, passports became more and more spread and started to be not only the passes guaranteeing protection by the sovereign but also a way to distinguish between good and unwanted parts of the population to further restrict access for the unwanted and control the movement of the wanted. The next and most significant chapter of this story is, as usual, when discussing modernity, the French Revolution.

The revolution posed three distinct challenges to the revolutionaries that were all addressed by creating the very first instance of modern identification and passport systems as we know them. The first challenge was the one of conscription (Torpey 2018, 17 – 18, 26; Woloch 1986). The French state, gradually increasing its powers throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, found itself during the revolution in a situation when the knowledge of the number of potential conscripts, their location of dwelling, and their physical conditions was needed as never before. Therefore, the birth registers, the passport system, and other means of identification used previously to merely restrict the fleeing of potential recruits attracted revolutionaries' attention.

Eventually, these systems were used to provide the state with needed information and to facilitate conscription. This gave France the ability to, for several decades, fight against coalitions that included most of the powerful European states of the time (Torpey 2018, 26, 69). This mechanism of knowledge collection and surveillance gave Revolutionary and later Napoleonic France the enhanced ability to strategically plan their actions (Woloch 1986) and to increase the number of conscripts. Now, authorities could better calculate the manpower they had, and subsequently, better understand the goals to be set for armies and producers of food and inventory.

The latter is especially interesting to consider as the end of the eighteenth century was the time when biopolitics got on the stage. The need to embrace and actively use unprecedented masses of the population made it necessary to know this population's bodily conditions much better than ever. Indeed, in the quest for rationalization of warfare and integration of it into the wider disciplinary fabrics of society, the ability to control the movements of bodies and to simply know their citizens was inevitably necessary for states to achieve substantial results.

The second challenge was the need of the revolutionary state to be able to protect itself from the flight of the nobility that could and would, gathering in enemy states, pose a threat to the revolutionary project itself. Although in the first revolutionary years, the idea of absolute freedom of movement as the right of all now-citizens was commonplace (Torpey 2018, 28 – 30), the attempt of the king to

flee the country in 1792 opened a debate radically different from the ideas prevalent at the start of the revolution.

Louis XVI tried to escape France disguised as a valet, written in the passport of another noble, as the old practice would require only the noble to be thoroughly described in the documents (Torpey 2018, 31 – 32). At the same time, their servants could just be mentioned as being such.

The other issue demonstrated by the king's attempt to flee was the inability of the then-too-small bureaucratic apparatus governing the relationships with the interior to facilitate issuing of passports to a large number of people without decreasing the quality of surveillance (Torpey 2018, 30 – 32). The old system of issuing unique passes simply could not grasp large quantities of potential possessors, not lowering the time and effort spent on every potential possessor.

Hence, the need to issue one passport per person and to have a universal, unified, and, obviously, in the case of the French Revolution, rationalized system was evident for the first time in history. Ultimately, these events led not only to the imposition of stricter passport controls but also the rationalization of them and the refocus of bureaucrats' attention to the bodily features of citizens. For biopower to be exercised on a massive scale, the need to “capture and fix” people in various documents and archives using their bodies as a relatively unchanging reference point is, perhaps, essential (Foucault 1995, 189).

The third challenge and the most prominent for the discussions of modernity was the first-ever understanding of national borders as such. The attempted flight of the king and some successful flights of nobility were the first indicators of the necessity of radical reforms. The threat of foreign invasion that became evident at the end of 1791 started, contra to the previous revolutionary pathos of freedom, the actual process of passport control restriction.

The very notion of the *foreigner* shifted during the revolution from the old, locally centered definition that encompassed all not-inhabitants of a certain village, city, or region to the new definition including all those who are not French into it (Torpey 2018, 37 – 38; Keshavarz 2019, 18). Interestingly, the flow of migrants from France to bordering countries made these countries to also distinguish between foreigners and their nationals (Lloyd 2001, 59).

Thus, the fears of invasion and the suspicion of all non-citizens created the notion of the foreigner as “someone from another country whose trustworthiness is questionable” (Torpey 2018, 38). As Torpey brilliantly puts it, “State officials were beginning to recognize that surveillance of untrustworthy elements defined in priori terms – separate and apart from any actions they might have committed

– had to be codified in writing, for there is no other way to identify ‘the foreigner’” (ibid.).

Now, the need to foster the lives of citizens and protect the *patrie* via disallowing access to foreigners became evident. Simultaneously, the problem of issuing passports to those who leave France became central as the need to distinguish between those who wanted to simply abandon the realm and those who wanted to abandon the *patrie*, thus posing threats to citizens and to the revolution itself, was becoming more and more important for the revolutionaries (Torpey 2018, 50; Keshavarz 2019, 19).

The atmosphere of suspicion was the source of the line of argumentation in defense of passport controls, especially interesting if considered from the perspective of biopower. Indeed, how could one argue for such restrictions when the discourse was so concentrated on freedoms and breaking with all chains that reminded of the *Ancien Régime*, including movement restrictions? The first answer was simply the protection of other freedoms acquired with the revolution (Torpey 2018, 45).

The question of passports was so significant for the survival of the revolutionary project as perceived by its contemporaries that Torpey goes on to say that “the debate over passport controls spoke as if the very fate of the revolution hung on the outcome of the passport question” (Torpey 2018, 46). However, simply closing the borders of the country, thus rendering the question non-existent, was impossible both due to economic reasons and due to the universal claims of the revolutionaries.

The second answer was the care about citizens' well-being. During the passport law debate of 1792, Breton deputy Codet argued that all those honest and prudent citizens of the Republic who travel around the country and internationally are endangered if they do not possess the sanctioned identity document as they cannot prove their trustworthiness (Torpey 2018, 46). Perhaps, it was a very strong argument if one considers the Reign of Terror that started soon.

Codet argued that “only the tiny minority of *gens suspects* and *gens malintentionnés* could possibly be opposed to passport requirements for travel” (Torpey 2018, 46; emphasis from the original). Thus, the care for the bodies of the citizenry and their ability to travel relatively freely became the justification for putting them all under sight. The life of benevolent citizens should be surveyed to be fostered and protected from those non-benevolent, criminal citizens who should be easily identified and whose movement and, hence, whose life should be restricted.

As estates' privileges were now abolished, all citizens were to be equally scrutinized by bureaucracy via connected and relatively centralized networks of various papers (passports, certificates of residence, the so-called certificate of civism, etc.) and archives. The idea of equality and the universal (although effective only within the French borders) claim of the revolutionaries gave birth to another argument, that of unification and the strengthening of the common French identity (Torpey 2018, 46). Now, where one comes from within France was not important if they could prove that they were a French citizen, that is, the one who should not be suspected *a priori*.

Here, I propose to make a short stop before a grand leap forward in history. The detailed description of the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary developments surrounding the birth of the passport system and other rationalized systems of identification that I have presented above is meant to demonstrate the enormous value of this phenomenon to the process of the creation of the modern state. Indeed, if we believe that Revolutionary and Napoleonic France are the cradle of modernity,⁶ then we should admit that, at least for a great part, it happened because this state was able to survey its inhabitants on the new level. It was able to know them, control their movement and classify them with unprecedented rigidity, demarcating not only groups within the populace but also, for the first time in history, making a clear, tangible yet symbolically powerful distinction between nationals and non-nationals. As Torpey puts it, "by instituting civil status (*L'état civil*), the secular registration of each new addition to the French populace, the new regime in France had made a major advance toward enabling it to embrace its citizens and make them available for its own purposes" (Torpey 2018, 69; emphasis from the original).

It is important to note that one should not think that all these processes were simply an intra-French phenomenon. Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, coupled with the challenges of the Industrial Revolution, made other countries in Europe adapt to new circumstances (Lloyd 2001, 59). Before the end of Napoleon's grand geopolitical adventure, France's allies and enemies were struggling with the urgent implementation of mechanisms of surveillance and movement control in order to repeat the French successes (Torpey 2018, 70 – 71, 73). That is, they wanted to also build massive armies, control the labor flow and production better and protect the ruling classes from foreign influences.⁷

⁶ Or, better to say, the moment when the modern state apparatus stood up in all its grandeur for the first time.

⁷ The only difference between countries was whether they wanted to be protected from revolutionaries or reactionaries.

It is interesting to note that labor control via the flexible and egalitarian passport system allows the modern liberal state to not simply bind classes of people to some territories and prohibit their access to others. It also allows the state to, through an adaptive system of rationalized massified control and targeting of concrete changing groups, create a much more flexible system of access that allows the capitalist industrial economy to flourish. Thus, the new system destroys old regional divisions giving rise to national ones that are much more adaptive to the capitalist industrial economy via creating national markets and giving the state more instruments to control these new larger markets (Torpey 2018, 25, 151, 161; Polanyi 1944, 63 – 67, 202).

Thus, with the French Revolution and Napoleon's expansionism, the idea and, subsequently the practice of mass movement control through passports spread around Europe. However, this does not mean that the modern passport system was simply established somewhere around 1800 and progressed from there. In contrast, the failure of Napoleon's empire opened a new era in passport controls, one of the simultaneous developments in the ways of identifying the population and liberalization of movement controls (Torpey 2018, 81 – 91, 99 – 104).⁸ The revolutions of 1848 and the free market discourse of the time only eased the intra- and international movement of the population.

The system as we know it, the one with every country having passports as the requirement to move from and into it, will come into being by reviving the passport system in the last decades of the nineteenth century to be fully completed in the twentieth century. This system will come primarily as a way to control and facilitate the movement of emigrants and immigrants (Torpey 2018, 118 – 126; Mongia 1999), the process that was especially exacerbated with World War I (Torpey 2018, 136 – 142; Mongia 1999, 553; Singha 2013) and post-war revolutionary and nationalistic movements and waves of refugees (Torpey 2018, 141 – 153; Mongia 1999, 553 – 554; Cohen 2014).

It was in this period that the passport became extremely more linked to the body of the person: not through simple descriptions via words but using photographs, the method of mass identification first used on Chinese migrants in the United States in the 1880s (Torpey 2018, 123). Indeed, this hunt for linking the document to the body was a crucial effort for the modern state as identities and personal stories are too elusive, changing, and abstract to be rationalized and processed via the bureaucratic apparatus, so the growth of the attachment to bodily characteristics was inevitable (Ajana 2013, 26; Gates 2005, 38 – 39).

⁸ Although with many drawbacks throughout the 19th century.

Quite simultaneously with American events, the French intensified the link of the document to the body by using two newest developments. The first development was the system of anthropometric identification called *bertillonage* (Kaluszynski 2001). It started as a method to catch recidivists but was very soon expanded to the “entire resident foreign population of France” (Torpey 2018, 131).

The second development, much more familiar to us, was fingerprinting. It was the first technology that allowed the bureaucracy to finally get rid of the problem of one’s identity and body characteristics changing with time, as fingerprints are forever with the body (Keshavarz 2019, 22). Hence, the document could finally be delinked from the person and anchored in the body.⁹

At the beginning of the twentieth century, another event happened that is very important for my analysis. After World War I, there were millions of refugees roaming across Europe and other regions. The massive group of these refugees was Russians fleeing their country as the result of the October Revolution and thus being unprotected by any state. These stateless people were a significant problem for European states, so the newly established League of Nations tried to solve the issue by introducing the “Nansen Passport” (Torpey 2018, 157 – 158). It was named after famous explorer Fridtjof Nansen who was the most prominent defender of the post-war stateless and took part in the creation of the passport named after him.

The Nansen Passport was, undoubtedly, a great achievement that for the first time in history, allowed to give certain protection to stateless individuals and became a foundation for contemporary international refugee law (Torpey 2018, 158; Keshavarz 2019, 25).

However, as it is well-known today, the level of protection that refugees get and the number of abuses they face are incomparable to those who have the privilege of having a passport (Keshavarz 2019, 91). Thus, this attempt to create a passport that is not state-backed shows that without the support and legitimization from the centralized state apparatus, the identity document significantly loses its value. It does it to the extent that, as I will argue further, it becomes categorically different from the state-issued passport.

With the anthropometric systems developed and widely implemented somewhere at the same time as the emergence of the Nansen Passport, the modern state bureaucracy could finally fully concentrate on the identification that was now placed “at the heart of government policy, introducing a spirit and set of principles that still exists today” (Kaluszynski 2001, 123). And as Ajana argues,

⁹ Although the implementation of fingerprints widely will take many decades to come.

the information collected via these new systems was used not only to identify citizens but also to distinguish between good, lawful citizens and bad, unlawful citizens and to try to understand which bodily or racial traits constitute the criminal (Ajana 2013, 28). With anthropometry, the passport's biopolitical function becomes especially visible.

The only other development preceding the end of the 20th century that I find necessary to refer to in this analysis is the important fact that the first-ever states that developed systems of universal identification of absolutely all inhabitants combined with strict movement controls were the two great totalitarian projects.

The first project was the Soviet Union, where the system of citizen registration and internal passports effectively encompassed the whole population and structured the life of the person around passports and other registration types. Here, it is worth citing Torpey at length, as he acknowledges that through the "remarkable series of decrees," the Soviet state managed to make

it increasingly impossible for Soviet citizens to find food or housing unless they were properly registered and domiciled – which registration, in turn, was vital for receiving a passport for movement within the USSR. Because these documents constituted the backbone of a system of controls that linked employment, residence, and access to goods, the internal passport would come to constitute an essential part of the everyday life of the Soviet citizen, "the heart of police power" in the Soviet Union. (Torpey 2018, 161)

Now, the citizen could not survive without having the right papers. The Soviet state linked the question of one's existence to their ability to abide by the strict set of rules centered around the internal passport. By the very fact of possessing the document, the possessor was part of this grandiose system of surveillance and discipline. The benevolent Soviet citizen, the one who has the right document and the information stamp in this document, got their life fostered for the greater good of the Soviet state. The unwanted citizen was denied access to almost all services and resources needed for human survival. One can hardly imagine a system that represents the working of a disciplinary society more literally than that. However, the Soviet Union had one great competitor.

The second totalitarian project was Nazi Germany, where quite the same yet even more detailed system was developed to control the Jewish part of the population at the beginning of what will later be called the Holocaust. Simultaneously, Nazi Germany was implementing the registration and internal

movement control system of its workforce quite akin to that developed in the Soviet Union just some years earlier (Torpey 2018, 163 – 167).

This system gave the Nazi state bureaucracy an unprecedented level of embracement of the population. It allowed the state to draft enormous numbers of citizens into the army, thus prolonging the fight against the Allies. Simultaneously, it allowed the state to survey and control the part of the population that Nazis considered degenerate and so dangerous to the survival of the nation. It is hard to imagine a genocide comparable to the Holocaust in a country that does not possess a universal system of identification and that requires its citizens to carry identity papers everywhere.

The next and final series of events in the history of passports that I want to discuss here happened in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The two seemingly distinct events, the technological developments leading to the development of biometrics and networks of digital databases and the terrorist attacks on the eleventh of September 2001, rapidly changed the world identification systems and movement controls.

First, computerization increased the effectiveness of the integration of state- and privately-owned databases and made it easier to store and share information between institutions and individuals. Computerization, the emergence of computer algorithms, and the rise of the Internet created an ideal infrastructure for the society of control's rhizomatic structure as they made integration of databases, both state and private, increasingly easier and swifter (Petrina 2021). The process of computerization and the rise of the Internet created new virtual zones where people can be surveyed and controlled and virtual traces that these people can leave behind.

Second, biometric technologies, especially digitalized fingerprinting techniques, allow storing and processing information about unique and unchanging biological characteristics of the body (DNA, eye retina, fingerprints, etc.) on a compact chip card that is easily integrated into a small document such as the passport (Ajana 2013, 3, 65 – 66; Torpey 2018, 197 – 198). In the words of Btihaj Ajana:

The emergence of biometrics as a ‘popular candidate’... for identification and authentication systems is mainly due to its ability to automate the process of linking bodies to identities; distribute biological and behavioural data across computer networks and databases; be adapted to different uses and purposes; and (allegedly) provide more accurate, reliable and hard-to-tamper-with means of

verifying identity. (Ajana 2013, 3)

It is hard to imagine any technology that is more helpful for identifying and analyzing information about bodies in the rhizomatic society of control than biometrics, especially when this technology is implemented in portable devices.

The 9/11 tragedy became a powerful stimulus needed to integrate biometrics into passports and ID cards on a massive scale. Just as in the case of late eighteenth-century France, the fear of foreign intruders, now personified by Al Qaeda and more broadly by jihadism, created a perfect atmosphere to start integrating these digital, biometric technologies of surveillance in the name of security. They were first introduced in the United States (Ajana 2013, 3), then in the EU (*ibid.*, 212), and later globally as the so-called developed world inevitably pushed others to comply with their new security standards. The result was the creation of a relatively universally integrated system that works through the multiplicity of agents as the development of technologies in the neoliberal era led to the proliferation of actors using biometric technologies, such as IT companies producing smartphones.

This new, relatively universal system encompasses and unites surveillance and movement control apparatuses of dozens of countries that collect, store, and use the biological information of hundreds of millions of citizens. This system makes it almost impossible to claim that someone is not this particular body if this person is in these databases. As Ajana suggests, “instead of being relegated to the status of the ‘container of the soul’ as in Cartesian dualism, the body is now being treated as the forensic dust of identity, as the crystal ball through which the ‘astrologists of identity’ seek to predict potential risk and future dangerousness” (Ajana 2013, 88); the popular slogan promoting biometrics “the body does not lie” only demonstrates this claim in prominence (*ibid.*, 89).

Passports that were once issued by local authorities who did not care to describe valets of nobles are now issued by the state authority that instantly puts the person in the world system of databases. Recently, passports and ID cards even became digitalized (Arora 2008; Goede 2019), and ideas such as “state in the smartphone” emerged (Tretiakova and Fomicheva 2020; Bateson 2021), thus becoming even more integrated into the system of databases. In this system, their totally depersonified biological information is registered, shared, and analyzed, waiting for the moment when the system will need to capture this body out of this information to further do whatever it needs with the person behind the body. With this degree of depersonification through biometrics, the state seemingly does not need the person behind the body at all anymore; the person behind the body is

increasingly more an obstacle for the bureaucracy's functioning. The next imaginable step, implanting a chip with such information right into the body, is already being proposed and discussed (Foster and Jaeger, 2008; Kumar 2007).

At this point, as the evolution of the passport is outlined, I find it possible to proceed with the conceptualization of the passport's relationships from person-to-state, person-to-themselves, and person-to-person perspectives. This will allow me to encompass all the various ways by which passports serve as facilitators of the exercise of power in modern society.

2.3. The State and the Passport

The history I depicted above tells us about various characteristics of the passport as an object used by various actors, primarily by the state, to identify, embrace and control their populaces.

As means of identification and access, passports were crucial to the creation of the modern state in general and the idea of the nation-state in particular. Passports facilitated the embracement of citizens on an unprecedented level, ultimately becoming almost the only document one can use to travel around the world and, in the extreme case of totalitarian countries, to move within their country and to access services needed for one's survival.

Although the contemporary European dweller does not need an internal passport to move from his town to another one, they are still obliged to have an identity card to interact with the state. Similarly, the state needs its citizens to have these identity documents so they can interact with them. Hence, one of the main functions of the passport and other identity documents is to be an almost universal *interface* (Keshavarz 2019, 45 – 47; Keshavarz 2016, 158).

Through this interface, the real, constantly changing world of persons can come in contact with the depersonified Leviathan of the state bureaucracy and, in a wider perspective, with the world of jurisprudence. It can do this via anchoring these persons in the description of less changing bodies written on unchanging (or, better to say, less changing) pieces of paper or recorder on electronic chips. The peculiar functional characteristic of the passport that shows how it is exactly the interface that can be used and abused by states (to influence other states) and citizens (to gain access to restricted services and zones) is forging (Keshavarz 2016, 162 – 187; Keshavarz 2019, 60 – 61, 88 – 90). Indeed, one can even use a forged passport to attempt to murder the French Emperor (Lloyd 2001, 1-3).

What is important to address here is that, by providing access, passports simultaneously make people *traceable* (Keshavarz 2019, 18, 30). As it often happens, the best example of a certain logic prevalent at a certain time is the one

that can be found in the writing of the philosopher of the time. As the modern passport system was born during the French Revolution, it is not surprising that one of the leading thinkers of the time proposed a police state model based solely on passports. This thinker was Fichte, and it is worth citing him at length here:

The principal maxim of every well-constituted police power must be the following: every citizen must be readily identifiable, wherever necessary, as this or that particular person. Police officers must be able to establish the identity of every subject... Everyone must always carry a passport with him, issued by the nearest authority and containing a precise description of his person; this applies to everyone, regardless of class or rank... Since merely verbal descriptions of a person always remain ambiguous, it might be good if important persons (who therefore can afford it as well) were to carry accurate portraits in their passports, rather than descriptions. (Fichte 2000, 257)

This proposed state where everyone would be obliged to carry a passport was designed by Fichte primarily for the purpose of making people identifiable and, via constant checking of passports, traceable (Chamayou 2013). One who leaves traces everywhere via being inscribed into archives and inscribed as often as it can happen could be easily found by the authorities if one acted criminally in any way.

Johnson rightly linked this proposal with Foucault's notion of panopticism (Johnson 2014, 10).¹⁰ In Fichte's state, the bearer of the passport should legitimately feel surveyed on a constant basis, as this is exactly what happens and what was proposed by Fichte as the ultimate way to get rid of any criminal activity. Big Brother is tracing you and he does this claiming to protect benevolent citizens who should not worry about leaving traces in contrast to criminals who should.

As it can be derived from the very genesis of the modern passport system during the French Revolution, the other important function of this document was the creation of means through which bureaucracy can collect and process enormous amounts of knowledge about their citizens as persons and as bodies. In the case of conscription, as also, for instance, in the question of labor flow control, the passport evidently serves as both an instrument of anatomo-politics and biopolitics.

¹⁰ It can be even argued that, at least to a certain degree, any modern passport system is an example of panopticism, although the Fichte's proposal is very radical.

As for the anatomo-political function, one can argue that by restricting or providing access to certain areas and helping the state embrace concrete bodies, the passport serves as a perfect instrument for making bodies docile and economically efficient. Indeed, the free flow of labor force in the time of powerful states can hardly be imagined without these states having the capacity to determine workers' access options through this flexible, body-connected, and portable instrument.

The biopolitical function of passports is linked to their capacity to facilitate the absorption of enormous amounts of knowledge about bodies, whether they are bodies of potential conscripts or potential workers. The modern state apparatus' power is partly dependent on its ability to know its citizens and those who come in the country, to know their conditions and needs, to classify them, to look for patterns indicating potentially unwanted groups, and to plan its policies in the long term.¹¹

Passports and identity cards are indispensable sources of information about bodies not only for the state that needs it to facilitate conscription but also for the scientist who wants to research the changes in economic, ethnic, and biological conditions of citizens of a certain country (Franken 2019; Lopes-Alonso and Velez-Grajales 2015; Sunder 2013). These databases, first manually written and collected and now increasingly digitalized, are perhaps the greatest possible source of information about bodies, and it is hard to imagine what can become a greater one.

Passports, thus, allow their issuers to collect unprecedented amounts of information about bodies and persons, which is further integrated into the colossal system of sharing and analysis. This aspect of sharing and analyzing became especially prominent and powerful with the rise of algorithms. As Petrina argues, algorithms are "an integral part of this new ecology of powers marking the emergence of the societies of control" (Petrina 2021, 221 – 222). Moreover, algorithms are incredibly flexible and operate using self-learning techniques.

Thus, algorithms facilitate the more open, flexible type of power exercising that is essential for the society of control. Indeed, algorithms allow an increasing number of agents to engage in collecting, sharing, and analyzing data to further classify masses of individuals in new, much more flexible, and even more impersonal, quantified categories. And, as algorithms often operate on the Internet that users usually connect to through their personal devices, they create an unprecedented type of traceability and opportunities for risk assessment (Petrina 2021, 221 – 222; Cheney-Lippold 2011, 167 – 169).

¹¹ And, as the example of totalitarian regimes shows, the modern state is capable of using passports to facilitate classification and control over the whole population rendering this population visible, traceable, and vulnerable.

Despite algorithms being used by both states and private companies, it is the state that, through its centralized power, the recognized monopoly on violence, and profound bureaucratic apparatus, can fully utilize their power to influence people's lives. For instance, when it comes to border controls and other operations with passports, algorithms are nowadays indispensable as they are the main risk-calculating instrument used when checking people's identity documents (Keshavarz 2016, 141; Keshavarz 2019, 34). As a result, algorithms work as an instrument of a new type of identity formation, one even more depersonifying, mathematized, and rationalized, creating a new "algorithmic identity" (Cheney-Lippold 2011, 165).

The third characteristic of the relationship between the person and the state facilitated through passports is distant control. The passport allows the issuing state to control and survey the person bearing it, but also to, for instance, defend it from another state, wherever this person is (Keshavarz 2019, 18, 39, 47). As I have previously discussed, this characteristic of passports is one of the oldest ones tracing back at least to the Middle Ages and the sovereign mode of power.

By its very design, the passport is portable and contains all the information needed to be an instrument through which the state can exercise its power even when there is no bureaucrat or policeman around and even when the bearer is a thousand kilometers from the state border (Keshavarz 2019, 18, 40, 47, 49). And it does it both by informing other states about a certain other state's citizen and their adherence to this other state and by putting this citizen into the set of rules and requirements imposed by possessing the passport of this state.

Importantly, this distant control characteristic is, as I said, predominantly passport's; the issuer can use other identity documents such as ID cards to facilitate distant control, but it is in the passport where this trait is the most prominent. The regime of Vladimir Putin even used this feature of passports to increase his regional power and to expand "the Russian World" as far from the actual Russian border as Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and of course, Donbas region (Makarychev and Yatsuk 2020, 46, 62, 112). In these puppet states, the Russian regime would deliver passports to their inhabitants on a massive scale to create a claim-making instrument for further military expansion in these regions in exchange for giving these inhabitants access to Russian services such as pensions and education.¹² Through passport, the state can embrace its citizens to the extent of competing with another state right on its very ground.

Here, it is also significant to note that the access function is exactly what is abused by Putin's regime. The passport and the ID card¹³ are the most basic

¹² As someone who lived in Crimea in 2014-2017, I, the author, was also passportized as to access the school system without becoming a rogue, one had to get a Russian passport.

¹³ Which is, in the case of Russia, called the internal passport.

instruments through which a person can access the state, communicate with the state, and use its services, including the services related to the juridical realm, as the passport also gives access to one's juridical body.

Importantly, this distant power of passports works on the level of subordination of the person to common norms and practices (Keshavarz 2019, 39, 47). The passport and other portable documents of a kind discipline people. They make bearers or potential bearers comply with a set of habits, be it the simple, often self-imposed, rule to always carry the document with oneself in case anything happens or standardized procedures of getting a passport or crossing the border.

In the situation of crossing the border, the passport demonstrates that the system of identification is nowadays much more international than national (Keshavarz 2019, 42). Despite your passport being issued by a certain nation-state, on the level of practice, what you do with your passport is relatively similar anywhere in the world, while the universal design of passports only stresses the allegiance of every carrier to a certain world community.¹⁴

Thus, through the facilitation of conduct of conducts via the passport system,¹⁵ the state and the world system (constructed of many cross-legitimizing states and state-recognized institutions) exercise their power over citizens everywhere. This exercise works on a much deeper level than a simple imposition of allegiance to a certain state on a person. The passport system creates numerous life experiences a person has, thus making this person reaffirm their subordination to the system each time they want to use the passport to access a certain service or a certain area. The discussion of life experiences leads us to the next subsection, where I closely address the bearer's relation to their passport.

2.4. The Bearer and the Passport

In this subsection, I would like to focus on an aspect that perhaps could be described in the previous subsection of my thesis, but which is distinguishable by how deep it relates to one's personality. If all examples described above are the cases where the personality behind the passport is more or less indifferent, then in the case of the classificatory function, the personality becomes central.

¹⁴ Which, of course, is a much more wishful illusion produced by such design than the reality, as the reality of border crossing demonstrates demarcations between countries and classes being all over the place (see, for instance, Balibar and Williams 2002).

¹⁵ And indeed, Keshavarz notes that the passport system can be viewed as "material articulations performing upon the will and acts of moving and migrating by all those actors capable of movement" (Keshavarz 2019, 39) thus facilitating the conduct of conducts.

As discussed in the historical subsection, passports from the very early stages of modernity were used to restrict access to unwanted groups of the population. With the second revival of passports in the late nineteenth century, this function became one of the cornerstones on which national, ethnic, and race identities were built and implemented into people's minds. Passports were the fields on which new modernistic categories of national allegiance (Keshavarz 2019, 41), *ethnos* (Torpey 2018, 8, 145, 225; Baiburin 2012; Pipko and Pucciarelli 1985, 917), race (Torpey 2018, 8, 119, 126, 135; Mongia 1999; Keshavarz 2019, 20), and sexuality (Torpey 2018, 230; Keshavarz 2019, 23) were constructed and imposed on the population.

The peculiar characteristic of the passport here is that it links categories created by states to classify and divide masses for the purposes of the functioning of modern bureaucratic apparatus to bearers of passports. It happens in a very personal way, exacerbated by the passport's portability and attachment to the person and their body (both symbolic and physical). In the process of passports' usage, these categories become one of the sources of information about bearers not only for the state but for the bearers themselves. The question "who am I?" is answered by the person when they cross the border by referring to a passport, this portable document that links one's body and personality.

Furthermore, the passport forces the person to choose their personality from the list created by the government, be it ethnicity (and the state does not care if one feels like half-French half-German, they must choose one) or sexuality.¹⁶ Such situations of encountering the need to self-impose a certain classification, via making the life without such self-imposition much less comfortable for the person, nudge the person towards voluntarily accepting this self-imposition. The passport is instrumental in conducting the conduct.

Slowly, the person's identity is kidnapped by the passport, and the paper via the reference to the body dictates the person who they really are. With time, they will willingly defend the classification that they once imposed on themselves due to the need to access certain services or certain zones.

Perhaps, it is possible that a certain person's identity cannot be much endangered by this aspect of their passport. However, on a grander scale and spread through generations, this aspect becomes one of the factors influencing the identities of large groups and even the identity of the population as a whole (Mongia 1999).

¹⁶ Usually giving a choice from only male and female, the third option is a rather new and not common development (Torpey 2018, 229-230).

Interestingly, the passport has so much symbolic power that it can do something the state certainly does not want and intend it to do: it can become more important than the national identity. For instance, in Eastern Europe, especially in former Soviet Republics, weak national identities cannot compete with the staggering materiality of passports and accesses they provide. So, the passport becomes denationalized. It becomes seen by the populace as a mere document of access (to services and territories), a matter of simple business (Makarychev and Yatsuk 2019, 20). In the cases of regions such as Moldova or the Baltics, having several passports and using them interchangeably to access different services is a norm of life (ibid., 83). It goes so far that, as Makarychev and Yatsuk mention, people in these areas usually refer to themselves as having a particular passport rather than being a national of a particular country (ibid.).

2.5. Interpersonal Aspect of the Passport

The last, interpersonal aspect of passport's influence on people that became especially prominent in the neoliberal era is vividly demonstrated by their ability to be the instruments for bragging. It is neoliberal so far as a passport becomes commodified and marketized, becomes a property¹⁷ that can be compared to others and traded via acquiring a new passport instead of the previous, less privileged. For the consumer-citizen of neoliberalism, the passport is the commodity as their nationality is.

As Keshavarz describes it, passport possession can be something one brags about (Keshavarz 2019, 58 – 59). What can people brag about? One can distinguish between three main traits of a passport here: (i) how thick it is, (ii) by whom it was issued, (iii) and how many passports one has. The “thickness” characterizes the number of visas and other stamps a person has in their passport, the thing so important for some people that they travel to new places just for the sake of getting one another stamp in their collection (ibid.).

The comparison of issuers' traits is even more peculiar in its workings. As Balibar and Williams argued, the world is divided by passport controls into at least two parts: one that does not need a visa for almost everywhere and one that needs it desperately (Balibar and Williams 2002). Hence, the best is the passport that gives access to the largest number of countries and the richest of them.¹⁸

¹⁷ In the case of some countries such as Cyprus, one can even literally buy nationality and hence a passport.

¹⁸ The Russian passport gives easy access to many countries of the so-called Third World, while the Dutch passport gives access to countries of the so-called First World. Hence, following the neoliberal logic, the Dutch passport is the preferred possession.

Interestingly, not only the number of countries and their richness can be seen as the benefit of a certain passport but also the comfort this passport gives to the traveler. As anyone who traveled out of the EU or inside the Union knows, the possession of a European passport makes the time spent waiting in line in the passport control zone much lower.

One should add the obvious fact that some countries are more powerful in protecting their citizens outside their borders. So, especially for people from places such as Post-Soviet countries, one's passport can be seen as one's protective shield and can be compared to others' shields.

The third, quantitative trait, by which I mean the ability to possess many passports and brag about the number, is quite a characteristic one to Post-Soviet and other regions, most vividly in the places bordering many countries such as Western Ukraine or Moldova. This is especially typical for quasi-states such as Transnistria. The documents issued by these internationally unrecognized countries are much less valuable than those issued by recognized ones. So, when the opportunity to get a passport from a neighboring country is given to the local populace, it happily uses this opportunity and willingly goes through any procedures the governing state imposes on it, sometimes acquiring plenty of passports (Ivan 2014). People know that the passport is a powerful object, and they seek to use its power and increase it.

To sum up, in this section, I outlined the history and workings of the passport and tried to interpret this phenomenon through the perspective of biopower. At this point, I find the discussion of the passport and its characteristics complete enough to proceed with generalizations, as the goal of my thesis is not only to characterize the passport but also to conceptualize and characterize the broader category of objects. In the next section, I will first deduce the main characteristics of this broader category of objects using the characteristics of the passport that I discussed in the present section.

3. The Category of Objects

I will start this section with an attempt to distinguish the unique category of objects which includes the passport using the latter's characterization that I performed in the previous section as conceptual grounds. Afterward, I will further demonstrate the existence of this broad category and the relevance of my conceptualization by applying this conceptualization to the case of the recent merger between the state and the IT sector.

As I argued, the society of control's rhizomatic distribution of power facilitates the birth of the new agent that embraces the population, disciplines bodies, and collects knowledge about the masses. This new agent is IT companies. As I will argue, there is an object produced by IT companies, namely the smartphone, that resembles identity documents in many aspects. Thus, the moment when the smartphone and identity documents become cross integrated reaffirms the ability of these documents to shape human behavior. By analyzing the most prominent example of this cross-integration, the Ukrainian *Diia* app, I will demonstrate how the contemporary state and IT companies intertwine with each other, facilitating the possibility of an unprecedented degree of control over citizens

3.1. The Generalization

To start with the generalization, listing the characteristics of the passport that I outlined above can be useful. So, what do passports do that makes them functionally or anyhow else distinguishable? I suggested that there are several primal characteristics of the passport that make it such a valuable instrument for the state and other actors. This value stems from the passport's material design, its quality of being issued by the state, and its integration into a wider system of archives, checkpoints, databases, police patrols, borders, state institutions, businesses, etc.

The passport is a portable object that functions as an interface between the person and the other actor, usually state institutions and agents. It does it by anchoring this person in the written (or digital) description of certain unchanging characteristics of their body¹⁹ and links it to various databases via terminals that state and other actors use to read chip cards.²⁰

Through this combination of depersonification and encryption, passports allow states to embrace great masses of their and foreign citizens, classify them, sort unwanted or wanted ones, trace their moves and actions, and interact with them on the individual level (including significant life events such as marriage, childbirth, imprisonment, etc.).

Attachment to the bearer's body and identity is perhaps one of the passport's most incredible characteristics. These portable identity documents become a sort of reference point for ourselves through which we can answer the question "who am I?" With the help of biometrics, this question is answered with "you are the

¹⁹ Be it their date and name of birth, their ethnicity, the description of their body, the photographs, fingerprints, or a chip that contains all that.

²⁰ It is valuable to note here that the bearer sees significantly less information about themselves than the agent checking the passport, as this information is accessible only through the connection of passports to a wide world of databases (Keshavarz 2019, 62).

codified description of your body.”

Through the attachment and through the need to, from time to time, use passports, thus reminding ourselves that we are viewed first of all as unchanging bodies, passports constitute one’s identity and shape one’s life in a way impossible for non-portable non-attached objects. As I discussed in the previous section, the workings of the passport go so far as to create identities and become so important to people that they can be proud of the passport, can brag about it, and, following the neoliberal logic of entrepreneurial self-empowerment and possession, can wish to get a better passport or a number of them.

Simultaneously, passports are integrating us into networks of surveillance and risk assessment, so needed for the modern state to come into being and develop. They provide the state to control people, shape their actions, and even influence other states through their trait of distant control.²¹

For generalization, the most important characteristic of passports is their function as *means of identification and access*. First, passports, working as a portable interface, provide the state, the bearer, and other actors with the ability to identify a person linking this person to a certain body and a certain set of information about this body contained in databases.

Second, passports are the access providers. Via passports, the state accesses the person; the passport renders the person processible for the bureaucratic apparatus.

As for the bearer, the passport is the ticket that one should show to get access to various essential services and zones. Here, the access function is even more important. To access almost any state service or even leave the state’s territory, one needs to have a right *state-issued* paper, be it a passport, an ID card, or a COVID passport.

The emphasis on *state-issued* is very important to consider here. The state, represented by its bureaucratic apparatus, is the only actor that possesses capacities that give the passport so much power. Private companies also issue their workers identity cards or other types of identity documents that allow these workers to access certain areas or information. Of course, these objects do serve as local means of identification and discipline workers by making them perform certain formalized activities with these objects. The reason not to include them is their limitedness to the world of one or several private enterprises.

Hence, these identity documents lack the important characteristic of integration into grandiose networks of databases that allows objects such as the passport to facilitate the embracement of the population. Also, same as the Nansen Passport, they lack the support from the internationally recognized centralized state that makes passports and other state-issued identity documents so uniquely powerful.

²¹ As I noted in the previous section, the distant control trait is primarily the passport’s. Other objects from the broad category that I conceptualize in the current section have a potential to facilitate distant control, but they can do it on a much less significant level.

Thus, the quality of being issued by the state provides the document with the power of this state on the symbolic level based on the international recognition of this state and its ability to identify and protect its citizens. Simultaneously, the powerful bureaucratic apparatus utilizes this document and makes it crucially helpful for embracement, discipline, control, and knowledge collection so needed for the modern state to flourish.

Thus, the quality of being issued by the state marks the border between passports and, for instance, the private company-issued identity card. The limitedness of the private company's abilities to influence people cannot provide the same level of attachment and influence over one's identity; private-issued documents cannot dictate to the person who the person is in their everyday life. When one leaves the workplace, one can simply forget about these IDs until the next working day comes. As a result, such document cannot become so instrumental for the actor in embracing, governing and disciplining the population as the passport, and neither can it build such a strong personal connection with the bearer.

The connection with the person is very important to consider. To build a strong personal connection and to be able to influence one's identity and one's actions on an everyday basis, means of identification and access should be (i) portable, that is carried by the person, and (ii) directly attached to bodily characteristics of this person.²² Hence, I find it necessary to distinguish a category of objects narrower than just means of identification and access. Passports and other state-issued identity documents, I argue, are members of the unique category: *state-issued portable attached means of identification and access*, or, to put it simpler, *state-issued portable identity documents*.²³

Which other portable objects share the same main characteristics and hence are part of the same category? The first, rather obvious, answer is all identity documents that are issued by the state. So, additionally to passports, these are ID cards, driver's licenses, military IDs, vaccination passports, etc.

However, there is an object that emerged and developed in the private sector that interestingly resembles some characteristics of state-issued portable identity documents. This object is the smartphone.²⁴ Despite not being a part of the same category for reasons I will discuss further, the smartphone's similarity to it allows

²² For this reason, the early passports of the time when they were merely papers legitimized by the authentic signature of the sovereign are qualitatively different from the later passport. Additionally, they were not attached to networks of archives and databases. Using my terminology, they *are* means of identification, but they are *not* state-issued means of identification (this quality developed with the development of the bureaucracy) and certainly *not* state-issued portable attached means of identification and access.

²³ *Means of identification and access* formulation is preferred here as it is more universal, and thus it includes objects such as chips and badges (such as the infamous Yellow Badge) or mobile applications such as the one that I will discuss further. However, due to its lengthiness, it is reasonable to use *state-issued portable identity documents* formulation when discussing identity documents issued by the state.

the state to integrate identity documents into this device. This cross-integration, I will argue, perfectly demonstrates how powerful objects from the category of state-issued portable identity documents became with the rise of digital technologies in the society of control.

So, in the following, I will apply the generalization that I outlined here to the recent case of the merger between state-issued portable identity documents and the world of IT. I will do this primarily to demonstrate that the generalization that I performed is not a mere description of a phenomenon using Foucault's and others' vocabulary. Instead, it is a conceptual framework that allows us to address novelties yet not covered by the theory. One such novelty is the idea of the "state in the smartphone" (Tretiakova and Fomicheva 2020; Bateson 2021). To analyze this recent development, I find it necessary to first briefly discuss the smartphone and its similarities with the passport.

3.2. The Smartphone and its Similarities to the Passport

The smartphone is a rather new device that, however, shaped our lives on a level that will probably require many decades to properly study and understand. At least in the West, smartphones are omnipresent; they are *the* device of our time.

One can argue that they are nothing but a mere combination of computers and telephones. However, it is through their resembling of some characteristics of state-issued portable identity documents that smartphones are incredibly more than just a combination of the two. If the simple cell phone is an object very similar to passports of premodernity, that is, simply a medium that contains a message from one person to another,²⁵ the smartphone is a device integrating its bearer into the world of digital services and ultimately serving as the bridge from one's person and body to one's digital body(ies). Indeed, just like the passport and the identity card, with time, the smartphone has become increasingly more important for the normal functioning of the contemporary person. As Žižek notes, the smartphone, through the services and zones it gives access to, has become so integral to our lives that even when one buys the "light phone" wishing to get rid of the smartphone, they end up using both (Žižek 2019).

In contrast to computers, even portable ones, smartphones make the life experience of the modern person undoubtedly Internet-connected. Through their portability and attachment to one's life story and body, smartphones engage in the

²⁵ In the case of early passports, they contained message from one sovereign to another.

same process of formation of intimate relationships that passports do.²⁶ However, they do it on a much deeper level due to two reasons.

First, the smartphone and IT companies do not bear the negative Big Brother association as the state does, primarily because the IT companies never had the ability to ruin people's lives and interfere in people's affairs the state possesses. Indeed, this negative association with state-issued portable identity documents can be so significant that some states, most famously the United Kingdom, failed to introduce the compulsory identity document due to repeatedly occurring citizens' protests (Ajana 2013, 32 – 33).²⁷

Second, we use smartphones incomparably more than any documents, even passports. This usage covers incomparably more parts of our life as smartphones give access to numerous virtual zones, becoming increasingly more integrated into our lifestyles. These virtual zones are, for instance, the social networks where one willingly exposes their identity, the apps tracking one's life activity, banking apps, and the gallery of photos taken by the person.

The example of the gallery is especially interesting as, at least in the case of many people who often take pictures of events happening in their lives, smartphones create a certain picture of one's life and anchor this one's identity in this digital representation of life events. One's memory of their life and thus one's identity is dependent on the story told by pictures from the gallery, web search history, and other traces one constantly leaves in the digital world accessed using their smartphone.

The traceability aspect characteristic of passports is even more prominent when it comes to the smartphone. With this device, one's location, browsing story, and all activities one engages in the digital world(s) become traceable and potentially analyzed via algorithms. Indeed, the power of algorithms is exacerbated in the smartphone as algorithms allow for automatically collecting and analyzing these enormous amounts of information. As I already mentioned previously, one can even argue that in this new world of the constant Internet connection through a smartphone, a new, algorithmic identity is formed (Cheney-Lippold 2011). And with time, this attachment of smartphones and algorithms to us only increases. We access more and more digital spaces on a daily basis as more services, once

²⁶ In fact, the profound similarity between the smartphone and the passport was noted by smartphone producers themselves, as demonstrated by Blackberry's phone, simply called Blackberry Passport (GSMarena 2014).

²⁷ This demonstrates that, despite them being crucial for the development of the modern state, identity documents are not indispensable for this development as they can be substituted by various other means of identification just in a manner less elegant and useful for the bureaucracy.

tangible, now become digital: from mail to research, from communication to shopping, etc.

Previously, I have argued that identity documents used within private companies are not to be included in the same category as the passport as they lack the level of integration into the universal system of identification. Compared to these intracompany documents, smartphones still can create a great attachment to their bearer and significantly shape their life, but they still are not integrated into the state's system. Hence, smartphones are part of the category of means of identification and access²⁸ but not of the narrower category of state-issued portable identity documents. To fully become the state-issued portable identity document, integration with the state that uses these documents and legitimizes them so they can be recognized and processed by other states and international institutions is essential.

However, despite smartphones being thus ruled out of the category of state-issued portable identity documents, their striking similarities with it pave the way for the development of this category carried on by the state. If IT companies and their products are now so intertwined in their functions and powers with the state bureaucratic apparatus and documents issued by it, one can assume that there should be a point when the two finally converge. At this point, the state bureaucracy should try to integrate the smartphone into its workings, thus utilizing the possibilities to track, control, and interact with citizens provided by this device. Fortunately for my analysis, this point is not the imaginative one but one we can locate in very recent history. For this, let us discuss the Ukrainian app *Diia*.

3.3. Ukrainian Diia: the Meeting Point

Now world-famous Volodymyr Zelensky is not only an inspiring military leader but also a reformer who came with a team of young politicians with mostly business backgrounds. Among his many projects, one, “state in smartphone” (Tretiakova and Fomicheva 2020), is especially interesting both as the first example of such an initiative in the world and as the only big project Zelensky's government managed to realize before the Russian invasion.

The idea behind the project was to digitalize all possible government services, documents and databases. Afterward, the plan was to include all of them in a

²⁸ To be more specific, one can call them portable attached means of identification and access.

single mobile app. Thus, the app becomes a primal medium for interaction with a state, be it the registration of the birth or the new business, participation in referenda and petition signing, or simply access to a digital version of all documents such as the passport, the ID card, the driver's license, etc. (Tretiakova and Fomicheva 2020, 3; Bateson 2021).

The application is called *Diia* (Дія in Ukrainian), which simultaneously means “Action” and stands for “State and Me” (Держава і Я) (Diia, n.d.; EGAP, n.d.; Ukraine.ua, n.d.; Bateson 2021). This abbreviation, I suppose, is not just a catchy one so typical for the age of marketing. On the one hand, the “Action” translation directly points at the desire of the Ukrainian state to encourage people's interaction with it. So, the state wants to make people access state services more often using the app and to think about this accessing as of their action, their voluntarily choice based on how comfortable it is to use the smartphone app.

On the other hand, the “State and Me” translation points at the attachment trait characteristic of state-issued portable attached means of identification and access. Through Diia, the Ukrainian state tries to rebuild and empower citizen's attachment to it and its services. This abbreviation shows how Zelensky's government caught the winds of time and used them to create a new stage in the development of means of access and identification in general and state-issued portable identity documents in particular.

This new stage rises from the combination of, on one side, various identity documents and other information-collecting objects that the modern state traditionally used with, on the other side, the smartphone, thus creating a double linkage. So now, to access (in a very comfortable manner, one must admit) their passport or to vote at the referendum, a Ukrainian citizen can do it through their smartphone, this intimate device that has become so attached to us.

Through the double attachment and the double access,²⁹ an unprecedented level of influence on one's everyday life and identity formation is achieved. As I have argued previously, we tend to trust smartphones and the digital services we access using smartphones much more than the state, as the latter has many times shown that it can use people's information in a very violent manner. This is combined with the interactive component of the mobile app unprecedented to paper-based documents and services, thus providing an incentive for people to use Diia more

²⁹ As one now accesses various digital worlds, the now digitalized world of state interactions and the juridical world through the single medium.

than people used to access state services previously. And, of course, the fact that the app is accessible from any place on the Earth with a proper Internet connection and that the app constantly reminds of itself through the its icon and notifications makes the interaction with the state increasingly intensive.

Additionally, Diia empowers the state with some new capacities. First, it allows the state to trace people and algorithmically analyze them in a manner incomparable to the one it exercised previously with paper documents.

Second, with Diia, the Ukrainian state gets more power over the document as to fake the paper document, no matter how hard it can be in the twenty-first century (Keshavarz 2019, 76 – 77), is easier than faking the comprehensive digital environment that encompasses dozens of services and state agencies. Thus, the smartphone-based digitalization of identity documents and other services reinforces the power of the state to control its citizens resisting the dispersing tendencies of the society of control.

The app's official website vividly demonstrates how deeply combined the state, and the IT sector are at this point (Diia, n.d.). There, one can find out that the Ukrainian government understood that they were playing on the IT field with their app as they visually designed it in an Apple-like manner.

Diia looks just like yet another smartphone app out there. This IT-fication goes as far as names of concrete services and documents are given as if an Apple-like company created these services: e-child (for birth registration), e-referendum, e-passport, e-business, e-taxes, e-COVID passport, etc.

Moreover, the government recently used the flexibility of the digital environment to launch the new service, E-Enemy, that allows Ukrainians to report military actions and war crimes committed by Russians and their proxies directly to the government (Lovejoy 2022). Ukrainian government clearly understood that to become successful, they needed to copy successful strategies of IT companies, be it the overall design or the reliance on interactivity.

By mimicking the IT world's practices, the state creates a new picture of itself for its citizens; it is no more a bureaucratic, seemingly static Leviathan but rather a flexible, feedback-reacting institution interaction with which reminds of that with corporations such as Apple and their products. Hence, trust in the state is restored by erasing negative associations and replacing them with familiar associations with numerous other apps and digital services. As a result, the citizen is even more encouraged to voluntarily engage with the state, to trust it more, to seek its help, and to connect their identity to this particular state. Diia looks like the product of someone who perfectly understood the Foucauldian idea of government as it does everything to make people willingly follow state's

procedures and actively search for the way to act as the state bureaucracy wants them to act.

Interestingly, one can argue that through double attachment and intensive adaptation to IT practices, the Ukrainian government not only makes accessing state services more comfortable and more intimate for their citizens-users but also competes with other governments and their identity documents and services. If we follow the neoliberal logic of the passport as a comparable commodity, then Diia is a remarkable attempt to compete with others by putting the passport right into the device used by everyone on an everyday basis, and it does it via techniques well-proven to be successful in the IT market. Hence, now one can brag, referring not only to countries one can easily go with their passport but also to the usability of this passport (the same applies to other state-provided services and documents).

Diia, which I suppose is only the first of such state in smartphone projects, is the point at which the state and the private IT sector converged in creating the duet that embraces populations and attaches them to both the smartphone and state apparatuses on the level never achieved before. Perhaps, it is a pinnacle of control society, or even the next step after it that philosophers have only yet to conceptualize.

Thus, discussing Diia, I demonstrated that the category of objects that I conceptualized and characterized by analyzing passports can be instrumental when addressing other objects from this category or phenomena connected to these objects.

The example of Diia shows how, by distinguishing the narrow category of state-issued portable attached means of identification and access, one can identify and capture the impact of novel practices in the sphere of identification. Additionally, by distinguishing the broader category of means of identification and access, one can find and analyze objects such as smartphones, especially at the points where they cross the narrower category. Therefore, the categorization and conceptualization that I conducted and the framework I derived from this allow us to better understand phenomena that have existed for a long time and detect and analyze new ones.

Dangers and Conclusion

At this point, I find my thesis almost complete. However, before concluding, I propose briefly mentioning the dangers state-issued portable attached means of

identification and access can pose to society to stress the importance of the analysis of this unique category once again.

Dangers

In this thesis, I have tried to conceptualize the unique category of objects that have an incredible influence on state formation and the everyday life of people. These objects become increasingly more powerful with the development of bureaucratic apparatus and technologies, thus facilitating the strengthening of the modern state and its capacity to embrace the population. However, from the strength these objects have, many dangers arise.

First, they are the infrastructure of surveillance and control, so anyone who opposes Big Brother might find them dangerous. Second, especially with the digitalization process going on, the dangers of databases being used unscrupulously or with ill intent or even hacked become more and more prominent.

Indeed, even paper passports were very useful for committing crimes against humanity, be it the already mentioned Holocaust or, for instance, the Rwanda genocide, where *génocidaires* would use ethnicity indicated in ID cards and previously imposed on people by these ID cards to distinguish between another way indistinguishable Hutu and Tutsi (see, for instance, Stanton 2009 or Fussell 2004). With databases now integrated into hundreds of interconnected digital networks and with the new abilities to trace people, manipulate them, and use their biological and other information,³⁰ these objects' potential to be used with ill intent reaches a new level raising various ethical and security concerns (Ajana 2017, 11-13).

Thus, state-issued portable attached means of identification and access pose an increasing number of threats to society and concrete individuals. Hence, further study of this category and its traits is a vital task for researchers, even if we leave behind the role these objects played in the creation and continue to play in the development of the modern state.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have tried to characterize a unique category of portable objects attached to the individual on an everyday basis that includes passports. I have

³⁰ All these are facilitated via self-learning algorithms.

used passports as the main object of analysis as there is a vast literature covering them. To perform this characterization, I started with the general theoretical framework, mostly basing it on Foucault's analysis of power.

After outlining this framework, I started the in-depth analysis of passports and their history. This analysis allowed me to demonstrate the historical significance of passports, pinpoint various characteristics of passports, and the roles they played and continue to play in the creation of the modern state and in the everyday life of people.

As an object directly attached to the person but simultaneously depersonifying them by anchoring them in their bodily traits, the passport has an intimate, identity-creating relationship with its bearer. As an object integrated into the massive state system of identification and access, the passport is a crucial part of the process of embracement that facilitated the development of the modern state.

From the analysis of passports, I derived a more general conceptualization of the category of objects that I called state-issued portable attached means of identification and access.

This generalization, in turn, allowed me to shed some light on the recent phenomenon of the digitalization of identity documents and state services facilitated by the usage of smartphones. By discussing this phenomenon, I demonstrated that the generalization I outlined could be applied to some new phenomena in the sphere of identification, deepening our understanding of them. In this application, I showed the peculiar way in which contemporary state and IT companies become intertwined, with the Ukrainian Diia state in the smartphone app being the most direct representation and the apogee of this process.

Finalizing my thesis, I suggested that state-issued portable identity documents pose various threats and should be researched with scrutiny. I make such conclusions because an object that can create such strong attachments with persons simultaneously being so deeply and extensively integrated into apparatuses of power can be used to impose identities on people and commit mass crimes such as genocides. This danger becomes greater and much harder to comprehend in the time of digitalization. Hence, the need to research these documents and better understand their role in the workings of power in society also becomes only greater.

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