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## Analytical Perspectives in the Corona Crisis

**"Conspiracy Theories", Maoism, Structural Analysis, Modern Money Theory, Bio-Power and (Trans-)Humanism <sup>1</sup>**

"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, [...], The General Assembly, Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights [...]." (UN, 10.12.1948)

**In the Corona crisis, the voices of experts in social or political science are hardly heard. Many are concerned with the deficits and conflicts of other countries, but there seems to be little interest in the preservation of our own democratic culture. However, it needs to be explained why fundamental rights have to be restricted in order to manage the dangers of a pandemic. Why is Europe going the Chinese way with lockdowns and de facto forced vaccinations instead of trusting the expertise, creativity and self-regulation of open societies? This article shows why this can only lead to a dead end, in mass surveillance and drug dependency that reduces people to the intellectual level of machines.**

**This study is intended as a plea for a revival of humanistic values and is based on a meta-theoretical analysis of Corona politics with five approaches. First, the catchword conspiracy theory is taken up, which does not exist in any research discipline, but serves to control public discourses. This can be used to denounce any political scientist who studies open and hidden stakeholder interests. In free societies, such defamations contradict the press code; in authoritarian regimes like China, they are a tool for ostracising government critics. Beijing's current Corona policy is not only rooted in Maoism, it also rhetorically harks back to the Cultural Revolution that victimised millions.**

**Currently, Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) is on everyone's lips because it gives politicians the green light to print money in the Corona crisis. In combination with structural analysis, the risks become visible: A second "level of instrumental measures" has been established in the European Union (EU), which controls finances outside the EU treaties and national law. This loss of control also affects health policy. The approach of bio-power shows that its dissolution leads to a "seizure of power over the humans as living beings". Transhumanism glosses this over with the promise of an evolutionary leap forward. Humanists, on the other hand, rely on a future in which people can preserve and develop their self-determined, creative nature.**

Despite a year full of setbacks and ever new cases of corruption in the health sector, critics of the current Corona measures are defamed as conspiracy theorists. But it is precisely this taboo that prepares the ground for more and more speculation. Because the citizens of free societies go through an education system that enables them

to reflect and examine what information is offered. Today the media no longer seem to trust this mechanism of self-regulation in complex information societies, so that they intervene to regulate. Therefore, the present analysis begins with the term **"conspiracy theory"**. It should be shown by way of example that it is a creation of

<sup>1</sup> This article is a translation: Sabine Riedel, [Analytische Perspektiven in der Corona-Krise](#). „Verschwörungstheorien“, Maoismus, Strukturanalyse, Moderne Geldtheorie, Bio-Macht und (Trans-)Humanismus, in: Forschungshorizonte Politik und Kultur (FPK), Vol. 5, No. 6 (2021 May 10), 30 pages.

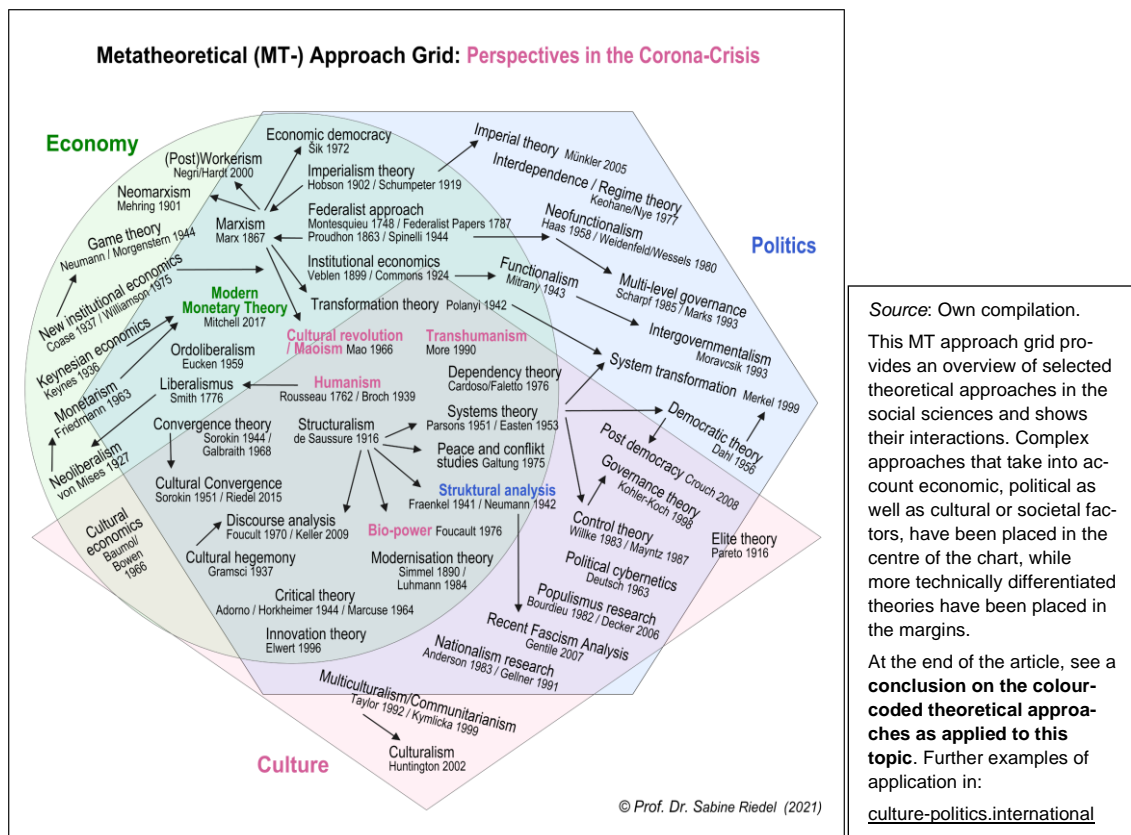
media language to steer public discourses and prevent scientific debate.

If one looks for theoretical models to explain the global anti-Corona policy(ies), the social concept of **Maoism** and China's **Cultural Revolution** are at the top of the list. After all, the corona pandemic first spread in the Chinese metropolis of Wuhan, even if the origin of the Covid-19 virus has not yet been clarified. Since there are tangible economic interests behind this rather cultural-theoretical approach, a search for current economic or financial theories is obvious. This leads to the concept of **Modern Monetary Theory (MMT)**. Its interesting feature is the oscillating character between (social) liberal and etatist instruments of fiscal policy, which challenge market economies based on the rule of law. Less topical, on the other hand, is the **structural analyse** from the time of the Nazi regime. However, it is worth taking a look at the work of the founder of German political science, Ernst Fraenkel. His main work, the "Dual State", not only offers an explanatory model for the seizure of power by a totalitarian regime before the beginning of the Second World War. His approach can be generalised to identify

the dangers of establishing authoritarian government structures at an early stage.

Since the Corona measures essentially concern health policy, the approach of **bio-power** by the French philosopher Michel Foucault should not be missing. As early as the 1970s, he coined the term bio-politics to initiate discourses on the opportunities and risks of medical-technical progress. Why hardly anyone remembers his valuable analyses today, although they could not be more relevant? His theses contrast in particular the statements of the **transhumanism** movement founded in 1990. The name hides a political-ideological worldview that remains contradictory in itself: It promises humans ("homo") the overcoming ("trans-") of their biological limitations through technical-medical aids. On the other hand, there is talk of replacing them by cyborgs (cybernetic organisms). This contrasts to **humanism** as an intellectual current that focuses on the human being as a self-determined individual. Like liberalism, it belongs to the cultural and historical heritage of Europe and paved the way for democratic, social and humane concepts in the first place.

Figure 1



## 1. The „conspiracy theory“ is an external attribution intended for manipulation

Since the beginning of the Corona crisis, media newsrooms have been dealing with so-called "conspiracy theories". This is understood in the popular sense to mean assumptions or hypotheses that attempt "to explain a situation, an event or a development by means of a conspiracy" ([wikipedia.de](https://www.wikipedia.de), 10.5.2021). From this definition of the term of a widely read internet platform it follows: The authors of such assumptions mostly do not refer themselves to a "theory" in the sense of a more complex set of ideas. They often just want withheld information on a particular issue to be disclosed or verified. They usually want to initiate a public discourse in which they can be heard.

The term "conspiracy theory" is at first the foreign description of another, outside person. However, the latter does not adopt the role of a mediator to take up the desire for a fair exchange of information and arguments. Rather, the use of this scientific-sounding term aims to cast doubt even before the assumptions made, whether presented by laypersons or experts, are examined and, in a second step, to push the author in question out of the discourse. This often happens by discrediting his professional reputation or exposing his personal weaknesses.

Dealing with public criticism in this way not only contradicts the press code, with which journalists have committed themselves to truth and the preservation of human dignity ([Pressekodex](https://www.pressekodex.de), 11.9.2019). It is above all an instrument of authoritarian systems to silence unpleasant critics. As reported by victims of the authoritarian socialist state of the GDR, the then former Ministry for State Security (MfS) regarded "politically undesirable citizens" as "opponents" or "enemies" whose individual dignity was to be destroyed. The Stasi worked not only with slander, rumours and intimidation. Fear, panic and confusion" as well as the destruction of personal relationships were also part of their arsenal (cf. Figure 2, [demokratie-statt-diktatur.de](https://www.demokratie-statt-diktatur.de), 10.5.2021).

However, the term "conspiracy theory" is not only used to discredit individuals. A second function affects research itself, especially the economic and social sciences, and especially political science. Because the subject of study are usually actors and their interests. Assumptions about needs and hierarchies of needs" are a prerequisite for researching them (Nohlen 1998: 280 f.). The scientific analysis clearly distinguishes between "manifest and latent interests" (loc. cit.), i.e. it also wants to expose hidden levels and

make them accessible to knowledge. This concern is entirely in the service of democratic systems, whereas the catchword "conspiracy theory" renders relevant questions about actors and their hidden intentions implausible and ridiculous.

Such an approach is not common in an open research culture; ideally, scientific doubt comes first. Moreover, theories are not either "true or false". This binary logic is considered outdated even in today's age of quantum computers ([zeit.de](https://www.zeit.de), 2.5.2014). Rather, science is always concerned with the question of whether and to what extent theoretical models can explain reality. Some theories have a wide range, others are only valid under certain conditions, still others prove to be outdated, which does not make them "wrong" either. Finally, there are such complex hypotheses that their verification requires a lot of money and a whole team of experts (cf. the topic of vaccine approval), so that results are even longer in coming. The most important thing, however, is that a free research culture is always characterised by a pluralism of theories: "Not the sequence and replacement of one paradigm by another [...],

Figure 2

### The Ministry for State Security (MfS) of the GDR and the Strategy of Decomposition:

"'Decomposition' as a method of dealing with politically undesirable citizens emerged as an alternative strategy to avoid overt, legal prosecution. [...]"

In the run-up to a planned 'decomposition', the Stasi looked for a person's weak points in order to take action precisely there. These were explicitly aimed at destroying individual dignity. Depending on their effectiveness, the Stasi spread slanderous rumours, intimidated, interfered in the professional environment and private life, criminalised the actions of those affected and organised massive interference in everyday life. [...]"

The writer and former political prisoner Jürgen Fuchs described the strategy of 'decomposition' as an 'attack on the soul of that person'. The 'target person', the 'opponent' or the 'enemy', as the Stasi referred to people in the files, was to be unsettled by the Stasi's measures. They shouldn't be able to do anything other than deal with their collapsed lives. [...]"

The aim of "decomposition" was to destroy self-confidence. The Stasi wanted to create fear, panic and confusion, deprive its targets of the love and security of friends and family, provoke disappointment and dissatisfaction or achieve public stigmatisation. They wanted to destroy the constants of a human life step by step. [...]"

Source: Die Strategie der Zersetzung, in: Demokratie statt Diktatur, Stasi und die Menschenrechte, [demokratie-statt-diktatur.de](https://www.demokratie-statt-diktatur.de), 10.5.2021 [Translation and highlighting blue: S.R.].

but the plurality and competition of political-theoretical designs are the hallmark and stimulating element in the research process of political science" (Nohlen 1995: 656).

Figure 3

**Interview with Roland Wiesendanger on his study on the laboratory hypothesis:**

Question: [...] What evidence have you collected and analysed that you have now come to this conclusion?

Yes, on the one hand, these corona viruses that are triggering the current pandemic have special properties. *They can dock particularly easily onto human cells and then penetrate them, so that very easy transmission from person to person can occur.* And this is actually a characteristic that previous corona viruses did not yet have, i.e. corona viruses have triggered pandemics or epidemics before, such as SARS and MERS. But in none of the cases has there been a global pandemic. These are indeed new properties that we have not previously seen in corona viruses.

And the interesting thing is that there have been scientific publications in the specialist literature describing, *how a group of researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology have carried out precisely such experiments to make corona viruses more infectious, more dangerous and, unfortunately, as we have to see, also more deadly for humans.* For ten years now, this so-called *gain-of-function research* has been the subject of criticism at the international level by many scientists, but also by politicians. *Such research was banned during the Barack Obama administration in the USA between 2014 and 2017 and was discussed by the German Bundestag and the German Ethics Council as early as 2014 [...]*

In this context, it is important to emphasise that scientists already estimated in 2012 that there is an 80% risk of a global pandemic in the next 10 years, i.e. by 2022, based on this dangerous gain-of-function research. *And we absolutely must prevent further pandemics from occurring in the future.* This means that every scientist is in fact asked to contribute his knowledge and his possibilities to ensure that this topic is now really taken seriously from all sides and that, in the end, there is also public pressure. [...]

It is also extremely important for policy makers to know, was it a laboratory accident or was it a natural zoonosis [transmission from animal to human, S.R.]. Because the consequences and ultimately the decisions that would have to be made would be completely different in both cases. [...] What is crucial for the future of our children and grandchildren is whether such pandemics will recur at regular intervals, because the danger has not been averted. [...] *And in the end, one can still argue that it was a zoonosis. But the fact is that this high-risk gain-of-function research has done nothing at all to help us be better prepared for this global pandemic, that has become a reality. That means that we have to work towards banning this kind of research globally, as the US government has already done from 2014 to 2017."*

Source: Hamburger Professor sicher. „Corona kam doch aus einem Labor in Wuhan!“ in: [bild.de](https://www.bild.de), 18.2.2021 [Translation and highlighting blue: S.R.].

For this reason, the accusation of belonging to a "conspiracy theory" is rarely made by scientists. It is always journalists who want to give their doubts a scientific aura. Most of the time, the knowledge they have acquired is juxtaposed with the professional experience of skilled scientists. The mere attempt to assess a research topic that has been analytically conceived and worked on over months by means of a "fact check" carried out in a few hours or days shows incompetence and ignorance of scientific achievements. A clear, current example of this is the study by the physicist Roland Wiesendanger on the origin of the Covid-19 virus, which is discussed here as an example.

On the very same day that the University of Hamburg announced the Wiesendanger study ([uni-hamburg.de](https://uni-hamburg.de), 18.2.2021), the Second German Television presented a "fact check" on this at 21:01. Two journalists headlined "Hamburg university spreads questionable theory" ([zdf.de](https://www.zdf.de), 18.3.2021) and accused the author of technical deficiencies already in the subtitle: "The sources: among others 'Focus', Twitter and Youtube." Apparently, they hadn't read the foreword of the study, which had been uploaded to the network researchgate.net four days earlier. In it, the author reveals the concept, methods and objectives of his project: "The study is based on an interdisciplinary scientific approach, i.e. not on an exclusively subject-specific view, as well as on extensive research using all conceivable sources of information." (14.2.2021, vgl. [Wiesendanger 2021](https://www.wiesendanger2021.de): 3) For this purpose, he lists six different types, scientific literature in first place, print, online and social media in second last place. The author adds: "The references to this study have been structured accordingly in order to achieve a clear distinction between primary scientific literature (with and without peer review) and published expressions of opinion". ([op.cit.](https://www.op.cit.de)) The journalists obviously picked out the opinions, so that the reader should doubt the seriousness of the study right at the beginning of the "fact check".

The ZDF editorial staff used such dishonest methods not only to question the study itself but also the credibility of Roland Wiesendanger as a person. They claimed that they had conducted an interview with him in which he admitted not wanting to publish a scientific study: "His paper was 'not intended for the scientific community, but for the public', he told ZDF heute." ([zdf.de](https://www.zdf.de), 18.3.2021) However, these and other words have been put into his mouth and twisted with manipulative intent, as reported by the author in the following words on the ZDF "fact check": "I was blown away



because it contained nothing at all of what we had mainly talked about." ([achgut.com](https://www.achgut.com/), 16.3.2021) Moreover, he was not asked by the editors to release his quotes, as is otherwise customary in the media business. Thus, the accusation of technical deficiencies falls back on the two journalists themselves.

Journalists who immediately jumped on the bandwagon are also partly responsible for this misconduct of the media. These include well-known media companies such as Die Zeit ([zeit.de](https://www.zeit.de/), 19.2.2021), Stern ([stern.de](https://www.stern.de/), 20.2.2021) or Tagesspiegel ([tagesspiegel.de](https://www.tagesspiegel.de/), 20.2.2021). The news magazine Der Spiegel even adopts unchecked the invented quotes of the ZDF journalists and concludes that "here someone wants to provide a pseudo-scientific basis for conspiracy storytellers" ([spiegel.de](https://www.spiegel.de/), 19.2.2021). Apparently, they are not aware that they are describing their own approach. But not only Der Spiegel calls Wiesendanger's publication "scientific nonsense". Deutsche Welle's fact checkers also explain to their readers "Why the term 'study' does not fit here" ([dw.com](https://www.dw.com/), 20.2.2021). They cite science journalists as key witnesses. In other words, they use exactly the same kind of publication sources for which they dismiss Wiesendanger's study as non-scientific.

Nevertheless, in this case there were journalists who adhered to the press code, in addition to internet media (cf. [achgut.com](https://www.achgut.com/), 19.3.2021, [tichys-einblick.de](https://www.tichys-einblick.de/), 19.3.2021) as well as the Bild-Zeitung. There Roland Wiesendanger had his say in detail in an interview ([bild.de](https://www.bild.de/), 18.2.2021, cf. Figure 3). This gives the impression that the laboratory thesis on the origin of Covid-19 is being scandalised because it affects sensitive security interests that also involve a lot of money: Chemical laboratories around the world are conducting gain-of-function (GoF) research, producing new, genetically engineered vaccines that could be used as dangerous biological weapons in other contexts. For years, there has been the danger of a "possible pandemic, caused by the accidental release of artificially created viruses from genetic engineering laboratories, with incalculable danger potential for mankind" (Wiesendanger 2021: 52). Under international pressure, Barack Obama had banned this research in the United States. As a result, it was outsourced to the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China (p. 63), despite the known security deficiencies (p. 77).

To support these claims, Wiesendanger has peppered his study with documents. When journalists make this formality the standard of their judgement instead of taking up and examining the

explosive contents, it is disconcerting. For before and after the Wiesendanger study, there is encouragement from experts. Worth mentioning is the assessment of the French Luc Montagnier, winner of the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2008 and discoverer of the HI virus of the immunodeficiency disease AIDS. In an interview a year ago, he already expressed the view that Covid-19 was artificially produced in a laboratory because traces of the HI virus can be detected in it ([timesofindia.indiatimes.com](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/), 19.4.2020, cf. also: [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/), 5.1.2021). "Fact checkers" have again found its arguments to be "false" ([correctiv.org](https://www.correctiv.org/), 20.5.2020). The fact is, however, that the origin of Covid-19 has yet not been clarified. Only recently, the World Health Organisation (WHO) confirmed that there is no evidence for the favoured zoonosis theory ([who.int](https://www.who.int/), 26.3.2021). Therefore, 14 states demanded independent investigations from China, taking into account all origin hypotheses ([zeit.de](https://www.zeit.de/), 30.3.2021). In addition to the USA, Israel, Canada, Australia, Great Britain and Norway, this initiative is supported by six EU member states, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, the Czech Republic and Slovenia ([state.gov](https://www.state.gov/), 30.3.2021).

## 2. China's Covid-19 Policy in the Context of Maoism und Cultural Revolution

The recent call by 14 countries for further independent research to test the four hypotheses of origin is supported even by the Director-General of the WHO. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus remarked on the findings of the investigation team's report ([WHO-China Study](https://www.who.int/), 30.3.2021: 9) stating "that there was widespread contamination with SARS-CoV-2 in the Huanan market in Wuhan" ([WHO DG](https://www.who.int/), 30.3.2021). However, the role of animal markets is still unclear and the laboratory hypothesis cannot be ruled out: „Let me say clearly that as far as WHO is concerned all hypotheses remain on the table.“ (op. cit.) He also confirmed that the team "expressed the difficulties they encountered in accessing raw data" and added: "I expect future collaborative studies to include more timely and comprehensive data sharing." (op. cit.)

While Western countries base their Corona policy on the two zoonosis hypotheses (with and without an intermediate host), China assumes that Covid-19 was transmitted through the "(cold) chain products", i.e. through frozen products. Because this last of the four hypotheses cannot be ruled out, Chinese health authorities claim on this basis that Covid-19 was imported from abroad ([scmp.com](https://www.scmp.com/), 10.2.2021). In this way, Beijing wants

to get Wuhan out of the headlines as the place of origin of the pandemic and divert attention from its own responsibility. The EU representation in China has already bowed to a corresponding censorship by the China Daily ([sueddeutsche.de, 6.5.2020](https://www.sueddeutsche.de/6.5.2020)), probably in order not to put any additional obstacles in the way of the investment agreement. But their "hasty obedience" is likely to have damaged the work of the international experts of the WHO Commission. Relevant data will only be accessible, however, if Chinese "mask diplomacy" ([zeit.de, 20.3.2020](https://www.zeit.de/20.3.2020)) is confronted with critical questions.

However, there is no reason to relativise human rights violations in consideration of economic interests ([wiwo.de, 1.2.2021](https://www.wiwo.de/1.2.2021)). On the one hand, the EU member states have their own liberal economic and social systems at stake. On the other hand, with the outbreak of the Corona crisis, the Chinese government's repressive rule techniques have tightened drastically. On 23 January 2020, Beijing reacted overnight by locking off approximately 43 million people in the Hubei region. Because of the official 876 people infected with Corona and 26 deaths, the authorities closed all

shops and stopped all air and train connections ([n-tv.de, 24.1.2020](https://www.n-tv.de/24.1.2020)). This extent of mass quarantine was unprecedented in human history. Therefore, foreign observers initially doubted that the population would be sufficiently supplied with food and medicine under these circumstances. Panic reactions for fear of infection were to be feared ([sciencemediacenter.de, 24.1.2020](https://www.sciencemediacenter.de/24.1.2020)).

After a good 12 weeks, the Chinese government lifted the quarantine over Hubei and announced the end of the pandemic in China a further six months later ([welt.de, 17.10.2020](https://www.welt.de/17.10.2020)). At the same time, EU member states were preparing for a second wave and a further nationwide lockdown, which has already lasted six months. Journalists from Western democracies explained this discrepancy in different ways. On-site correspondents attributed the supposed success with an undertone of admiration to the rapid reaction of the authorities with lockdowns and mass tests: "Test immediately, don't wait for people to develop symptoms." ([tagesschau.de, 12.10.2020](https://www.tagesschau.de/12.10.2020)) The reader gets the impression that the authoritarian system has advantages because it does not have to take into account "personal liberties or data protection" (op. cit.). From a distance, journalists paint a different picture: "The courageous Chinese citizen reporters who showed the chaos, suffering and desperation of the people at the beginning have long since been arrested or disappeared". ([zdf.de, 22.11.2020](https://www.zdf.de/22.11.2020)) They report that the Chinese government is instrumentalising its hypothesis of an imported pandemic to stylise the fight against Corona into a competition of systems.

Indeed, the positive reports about China make us forget the inhumane instruments the elites there use to keep themselves in power. For this reason, other regimes are covered with sanctions and wars by Western states, such as Iran, Russia, Libya and Syria. In the EU, 40 different sanction regimes are currently in force ([dw.com, 9.2.2021](https://www.dw.com/9.2.2021)), including against Belarus "In response to the brutality of the Belarusian authorities and in support of the democratic rights of the Belarusian people" ([europa.eu, 17.12.2020](https://www.europa.eu/17.12.2020)). This deeply inconsistent behaviour of the EU's and many member states' foreign (trade) policy relations becomes all the greater when one considers China's ruling ideology. Despite various reforms in the past decades, it has remained socialism. Article 1 of the Constitution (1982) defines it as a "democratic dictatorship of the people" based "on the alliance of the workers and peasants" ([Constitution 1982, Art. 1 and Preamble](https://www.constitution1982.de/Art.1)). The other citizens of the state, such as the unemployed, the socially

Figure 4

#### The State Council of the People's Republic of China on the Social Credit System

"[...] State Council Notice concerning Issuance of the Planning Outline for the Construction of a Social Credit System (2014-2020), 14.6.2015:

[...] A social credit system is an important component part of the Socialist market economy system and the social governance system. It is founded on laws, regulations, standards and charters, it is based on a complete network covering the credit records of members of society and credit infrastructure, it is supported by the lawful application of credit information and a credit services system, its inherent requirements are establishing the idea of an sincerity culture, and carrying forward sincerity and traditional virtues, [...].

Our country is currently in the assault phase of deepening economic structural reform and perfecting the Socialist market economy system. The modern market economy is a credit economy, establishing and completing a social credit system is an important step in rectifying and standardizing the market economy order, improving the market's credit environment, [...].

Budget controls must be strengthened in government revenues and expenses, and transparency raised. Strengthen and perfect mass supervision and public opinion supervision mechanisms. [...]

Source: State Council Notice concerning Issuance of the Planning Outline for the Construction of a Social Credit System (2014-2020), State Council, 14 June 2014 [Translation and highlighting blue: S.R.].

weak, providers of knowledge ("intellectuals") or artists, are disadvantaged according to this principle or must subordinate themselves to it. In addition, there is the "principle of democratic centralism" (Art. 3) "under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought" (Preamble). Article 28 is also worth mentioning: anyone who questions the dominant role of the socialist economy will be punished and re-educated.

China's socialist system is thus still in the tradition of Maoist ideology, which is comparable to Soviet-style Stalinism. That is why the process of de-Stalinisation in the former Eastern Bloc from 1956 onwards led to a break with China, which had remained Maoist. Doch die Reformversuche in Osteuropa bedrohten allmählich auch Maos Führungsrolle. But the reform attempts in Eastern Europe gradually threatened Mao's leadership role. In reaction to his marginalisation, he sparked a cultural revolution from 1966 onwards (Erler, Kernig 1969), which was to end only with his death ten years later. Even though there is still no reliable data because this historical period is tabooed by Chinese historiography, Western sources estimate the death toll at 1.7 million and the number of political persecutees in the tens of millions (Leese, 6.6.2016: 7).

Some parallels to today's Chinese Corona policy are thought-provoking. Even then, Wuhan played an important role as an industrial metropolis. In the early phase of the Cultural Revolution (bpb.de, 6.6.2016), there was a showdown between two rival camps of the CCP, so that Mao had to fear a loss of control. Today, historians state: "The Wuhan Incident ushered in the final period of the Cultural Revolution that can be described as 'radical'." (Leese 2016: 66) Long years of state repression followed (op. cit.: 76f.). Mao's role is also comparable to that of Xi Jinping, the current Chairman of the CCP (since 2012) and President of China (2013). While he shares the title of "supreme leader" with some predecessors, he secured the privilege of an unlimited time in office at the People's Congress in 2018, just like Mao (sueddeutsche.de, 11.3.2018).

Similar to the goals of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Xi Jinping also relies on a permanent "improvement" of the socialist system through a mobilisation of the masses. He himself had been socialised at that time, i.e. he was one of the young people who were first incited against supposedly corrupt party cadres and then sent by the regime to the countryside for re-education (focus.de, 19.6.2016, bpb.de, 7.8.2008, zeit.de, 11.5.2016). But today's party elite does not mobi-

lise the masses to use open violence against regime critics, rather it uses structural violence: In June 2014, the State Council decided to introduce a social credit system by 2020. Officially, it serves to "establish the idea of a sincerity culture" with the aim of fighting corruption in the country and building a "harmonious socialist society" (State Council, 14.6.2014, cf. Figure 4). But after only five years, it has turned into a system of social control under state supervision that electronically monitors the population across the board.

As the Chinese State Council documents clearly show, this concept is built on two basic assumptions: Firstly, the modern market economy is a credit economy and secondly, politics can correct and unify this market economy order by transferring this economic principle to the entire socialist society. This is exactly the self-image of the Chinese type of "socialist market economy". This distinguishes it from similar models in the former Yugoslavia or the states of the former Eastern Bloc in one important point: While reformers like the Czechoslovakian Ota Šik combined the socialist market economy with a democratisation

Figure 5

**Kai Schrittmatter:**

Die Neuerfindung der Diktatur. Wie China den digitalen Überwachungsstaat aufbaut und uns damit herausfordert [The Reinvention of Dictatorship. How China is building the digital surveillance state and challenging us with it], Munich 2018, *quote*, p. 184:

**Huang Chunhui, Director of the Office for Creditworthiness on the pilot project in Rongcheng, in northeast China:**

"Director Huang takes a sheet, draws an egg, quickly cuts the top and then the bottom of the egg. 'This is society, he says: *At the top, the model citizens. And at the bottom, those we have to educate.*'

Then he explains the system. Every company and every citizen in China takes part. Everyone is rated. At any time. In Rongcheng, every citizen receives a points account and starts with 1000 points. Then he can improve. Or worsen. He can be upgraded or downgraded. *You can be a AAA citizen (a 'model of honesty', for which you need more than 1050 points). Or an AA ('Excellent Honesty', with 1030 to 1049 points). You can also slip to a C with less than 849 points, 'warning level'. Or even a D with less than 599 points, then the system has identified you as 'dishonest'. If so, your name is blacklisted, the public is informed about you, and you become an 'object of significant surveillance'.* This is what it says in the manual of 'Administrative Measures on the Trustworthiness of Natural Persons' of Rongcheng Municipal Government."

Note: [Highlighting blue: S.R.].

of state and economy in the Prague Spring (cf. Figure 1), the Chinese model aims to improve and complete the existing authoritarianism. With technological help, the ruling elite is even reaching for totalitarian power over the entire country for this purpose (cf. also chapter 4). What else can the goal of "perfect mass supervision and public opinion supervision" (cf. Figure 4) mean?

Covid-19 played into the government's hands in setting up such a social credit system. According to recent research, it has proved to be "a very flexible tool" to implement the new "pandemic-related regulations", especially in the current crisis ([merics.org, 3.3.2021: 1](https://merics.org/3.3.2021/1)). Citizens were black-listed for not wearing a mask or for causing panic by filming an emergency operation (op. cit., p. 16). However, this publication by a China Institute in Germany is less interested in the social consequences, but on the contrary recommends improvements to the social credit system. The private technology sector, for example, is not yet included, but has its own programmes, such as Alibaba, to determine the trustworthiness of its customers (p. 1). It is unclear whether the Chinese government has taken any notice of this. In fact, Jack Ma, the founder of Alibaba and one of China's richest entrepreneurs, has recently fallen out of favour, so that his disappearance over several months has triggered much speculation ([manager-magazin.de, 15.3.2021](https://manager-magazin.de/15.3.2021)).

Amnesty International has documented in more detail what really happened in China at the beginning of the lockdown in early 2020. The government's plans proved to be inconsistent and created new problems. Thus, the stop of all traffic obstructed the access to hospitals. Censorship and control of important information further unsettled people and made necessary corrective measures more difficult. The disclosure of personal data increased the fear of persecution and discrimination and triggered panic reactions ([Amnesty.ch, 7.2.2020](https://amnesty.ch/7.2.2020)). They were justified, as arrests of government critics show. In mid-2020, Xu Zhangrun, a professor of law at Peking University, was arrested after he challenged the Corona measures ([handelsblatt.com, 6.7.2020](https://handelsblatt.com/6.7.2020)). This includes the approval of insufficiently tested vaccines. In view of the great social and ideological pressure, it can be assumed that mass vaccination will hardly be based on the principle of voluntariness ([newsweek.com, 31.3.2021](https://newsweek.com/31.3.2021)).

The free will of citizens apparently plays little role even in the conduct of scientific studies. A few weeks after the lockdown in Hubei ended, almost all 10 million inhabitants of the regional capital Wuhan were tested. Even if the principle of

voluntariness was probably not observed, the research question of this screening program is admittedly of great importance – to this day. It was to examine the risk of infection posed by people who tested positive for covid-19 but showed no symptoms. The research results were probably already known to the Chinese authorities in the early summer of 2020, but they were not published until the end of 2020 ([Cao, Gan, Wang, 20.11.2020](https://cao.gan.wang/20.11.2020)). Thereafter, patients without symptoms of disease would hardly transmit the virus ([Esatum.de, 16.12.2020](https://esatum.de/16.12.2020)). Despite this crucial insight – which China has apparently accepted and stopped further lockdowns – the hypothesis remains in the Western media that people tested positive without symptoms pose a great danger ([DAZ, 26.2.2021](https://daz.26.2.2021)).

Social science research cannot answer this technical question, but it can point to the need for a discourse between experts. In mid-2020, the WHO already reported on the Wuhan tests. Journalists from major media houses, however, took over the discourse ([spiegel.de, 9.6.2020](https://spiegel.de/9.6.2020)). They cast doubt on the expertise of Maria van Kerkhove, head of the WHO's emergency programme, so that the opinion persisted that those tested positively without symptoms "may have a significant influence on the occurrence of infection of the Corona pandemic" ([aerztezeitung.de, 11.6.2020](https://aerztezeitung.de/11.6.2020)). The research network Korrektiv also described the WHO expert's statement as a "misunderstanding". At the end of the newspaper report it is stated "that transmission by asymptotically infected persons is rare but possible" and "it is difficult to investigate further transmission of the virus by infected persons without symptoms" ([correctiv.org, 17.7.2020](https://correctiv.org/17.7.2020)). This journalistic research leads to the question of who is allowed to label a person without symptoms as "sick" or as a possible virus carrier, the doctor or the state bureaucracy? Chapter 5 returns to this socio-politically relevant topic.

### 3. Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) advises money printing in the Corona crisis

On the surface, the pandemic has nothing to do with Modern Monetary Theory (MMT), but it is crucial to understanding economic policy measures in the current Corona crisis. The following is not an economic assessment of the central hypothesis of the theory. Rather, its socio-political relevance is to be discussed, from which several fundamental research questions arise. Such an analysis seems necessary because economists use their expertise to comment on social issues without taking due account of the experience of



the social sciences. There is often a lack of will to distinguish between politics and political science. Conversely, one can agree with the criticism that many social scientists neglect economic interrelationships. This deficit applies all the more to European studies, which in recent years has become a discipline of administrative science and evades controversial topics of economists and political scientists. This chapter aims to show that such interdisciplinary cooperation is necessary to tackle the Corona crisis.

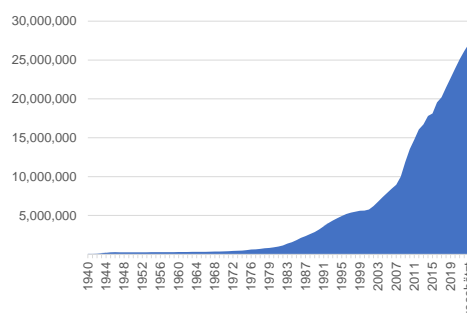
For about a quarter of a century ago, American economists developed the so-called Modern Monetary Theory (MMT), which aims to solve the problem of excessive government debt. According to this approach, one could abandon the high economic principle that a balanced state budget is the guarantor of price stability. Even high borrowing would not automatically create the risk of inflation. Provided that a state has its own currency and interest rates are below the percentage growth of its annual economic growth, it can use money creation as an instrument of economic and fiscal policy. By losing its function as a main source of revenue, taxation becomes an instrument of wealth redistribution. This would limit the money supply in the real economy and prevent price increases ([handelsblatt.com](https://handelsblatt.com), 16.3.2021).

Until the outbreak of the Corona crisis, this theory led a marginal existence. Only in the current situation, in which the governments' money shortage is worsening, that is getting more attention. This is due to the fact that their representatives are politically engaged or seek proximity to decision-makers in their governments. This raises all the more questions about the quality of this theory and makes publications on it vulnerable to interest-driven exploitation. For example, the well-known US representative of MMT, Stephanie Kelton, belonged since 2016 to the team of advisors of Senator Bernie Sanders, who had repeatedly applied for the presidential candidacy of the Democrats. The fact that he was not able to succeed was due, among other things, to the still limited acceptance of this new theory at that time ([watson.ch](https://watson.ch), 5.3.2019).

Republicans, in contrast, largely reject it. The national debt exceeded the 20 trillion US dollar mark in Donald Trump's first year in office. However, the US government was able to curb the increase in the following two years. It was not until the onset of the Corona crisis from March 2020 that the fiscal deficit jumped by about 5 trillion in 2019 to currently 28.1 trillion US dollars ([statista.com](https://statista.com), 7.4.2021 and [trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov](https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov), 22.4.2021, cf. Figure 6). Since the change of

Figure 6

### The US Federal Debt at the End of Year (1940–2025) in Million US Dollars



Source: Own compilation, [trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov](https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov), 22.4.2021

### Stephanie Kelton on Modern Monetary Theory. Money is there to be created

US economist Stephanie Kelton is convinced that a state can spend as much money as it wants if it has its own currency. A conversation about mistakes made by politicians and the real meaning of taxes. Interview by Claus Hulverscheidt, in: [sueddeutsche.de](https://sueddeutsche.de), 16.12.2018

[...] I beg your pardon? The state cannot simply raise pensions because fewer and fewer employees have to finance more and more retirees. The treasury is empty, so the pension level is falling in many places.

And that is exactly nonsense. In countries with their own currency, the government can pay pensioners as much as it wants, because it has a monopoly on creating money. It can also renovate as many roads, build as many kindergartens and order as many aircraft carriers as it wants. Inflation only occurs when the economy is not innovative and productive enough to fulfil all the wishes. [...]

What about the principle that the state can only spend as much as it receives through taxes and loans?

Wrong again. That may be how it works with private individuals, but not with a state. The US government doesn't need tax revenues to buy an aircraft carrier. It simply seeks approval from Congress and then instructs the Fed to push a button and change a few numbers on an armaments company's account. End. [...]

Wait, this is confusing: if taxes aren't used to fund the state, what are they used for?

The state uses taxes to withdraw part of the money that it feeds into the economy through its monopoly. In this way, he prevents too many dollars from being in circulation and causing inflation.

Taxes are not a financial instrument, but an instrument to combat inflation?

Exactly. They first give the money a value and then secure it. They are also suitable for redistributing assets and providing incentives for people to stop smoking, for example. But all this has nothing to do with generating income. [...]

[Italics: SZ questions, highlighting blue: S.R.]

government in early 2021, the republicans' criticism of MMT has been directed at the new president, Joe Biden. On 25 March 2021, Republican MP Kevin Hern introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives condemning MMT as a "recipe for hyper-inflation, higher deficits, and higher taxes" ([hern.house.gov](https://hern.house.gov), 25.3.2021). However, it can be assumed that the USA will remain on the debt course. Shortly after taking office, Biden launched a new USD 1.9 trillion aid programme, which the Federal Reserve Bank (Fed) will largely realise through the purchase of US bonds ([flossbachvonstorch.de](https://flossbachvonstorch.de), 9.2.2021, [die-stadtredaktion.de](https://die-stadtredaktion.de), 10.4.2021).

MMT representatives realise the current Corona crisis as an opportunity for their approach. They offer policy-makers the scientific legitimacy to keep printing new money without an upper limit. They literally take the burden off their shoulders of constantly having to justify themselves to a critical public. In the last financial crisis in 2008, a broad audience had to learn that since the gold standard was dissolved on 15.8.1971 ([welt.de](https://welt.de), 15.8.2011, Figure 6), there is no longer any collateral behind our monetary system and the banks create money by granting loans, inter alia (Weik, Friedrich 2012, [stuttgarter-zeitung.de](https://stuttgarter-zeitung.de), 13.5.2016). MMT has pulled the teeth out of these analyses, including many reform proposals and alternatives to the existing system ([vollgeld-initiative.ch](https://vollgeld-initiative.ch)). Accordingly there is nothing to criticise because the creation of money is not a curse but a blessing for today's economies ([zeit.de](https://zeit.de), 15.4.2019).

Many media contribute to the popularisation of MMT by transporting the complex scientific apparatus underlaid with mathematical formulas into simple messages. These simultaneously appeal to different groups of voters, conservative as well as progressive, and right-wing as well as left-wing. This is a temptation for politicians, especially before elections, which they can hardly resist, especially since the argumentation is made to suit them. Stephanie Kelton, the symbolic figure of MMT in the USA, gave astonishingly simple answers to difficult questions in the run-up to the presidential elections: If the US government needs money for an aircraft carrier, it's no problem: "It simply seeks approval from Congress and then instructs the Fed to push a button" ([sued-deutsche.de](https://sued-deutsche.de), 16.12.2018, cf. Figure 6). If seniors complain about too low pension incomes or parents about too few kindergartens, she recommends the same formula: The government "can also renovate as many roads, build as many kindergartens and order as many aircraft carriers as it wants". (op. cit.)

This leads to the exciting question of the connection between the outbreak of the Corona crisis and the rising popularity of MMT. For it needs to be explained why the governments of the world's strongest economies shut down their economies overnight. There were neither risk analyses nor hearings of experts in advance, let alone public debates on the goals, instruments and duration of such a lockdown. There was a time window for necessary preparations between mid-January and mid-March 2020, i.e. between the start of the pandemic in China and the WHO decision to classify Covid-19 as a global threat. Would the EU member states have sought alternatives to the lockdown if there had been no MMT that allowed them to take such high economic and financial risks?

Here, too, Stephanie Kelton wants to enlighten the public. In an interview she explains that the euro was born with a birth defect because the Maastricht Treaty (1992) stipulates a separation between monetary and budgetary policy. According to this, the finances of the member states are a national responsibility, while the supranational EU level watches over monetary policy. This construction is criticised by many experts today ([focus.de](https://focus.de), 4.1.2019), but they are making various reform proposals. Kelton believes that the presidents of the European Central Bank (ECB), Mario Draghi (2011-19) and Christine Lagarde (from 2019) have already reacted correctly: "The emergency purchase programme for bonds of public and private borrowers, which the ECB decided at the end of March 2020 to cushion the consequences of the pandemic for the economy, links monetary and fiscal policy" [zeit.de](https://zeit.de), 11.12.2020. In doing so, however, it justifies the breach of the EU treaties.

Even if a year later the ECB's bond purchase programme is described and justified as a "Corona reconstruction fund" ([faz.net](https://faz.net), 26.3.2021), it remains a violation of the current legal situation. This is documented in detail by the constitutional complaint of over 2800 citizens ([buendnis-buergerwille.de](https://buendnis-buergerwille.de)). Besides these legal details, contradictions in the sequence of important decisions in March 2020 are also interesting: The ECB already officially announced on 4.3.2020 that it had taken first "precautionary operational measures to mitigate the potential risks associated with the spread of the coronavirus, COVID-19" ([ECB](https://ecb.europa.eu), 13.3.2020). On 12.3.2020, the ECB Governing Council then decided on the aforementioned "comprehensive package of monetary policy measures" ([ECB](https://ecb.europa.eu), 12.2.2020), which the European Commission announced one day later as a

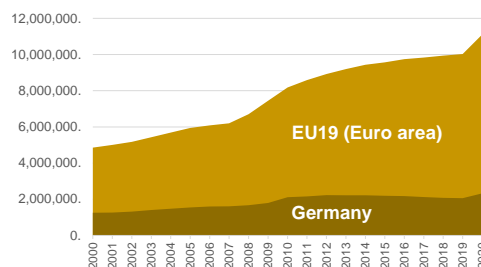
"coordinated economic response to the COVID 19 Outbreak" (EU-Commission, 13.3.2020). By then, only four EU members had decided on a lockdown, namely Italy and Austria (9 and 10 March 2020) and the two countries outside the euro area Poland and Hungary (11 March 2020). Apparently, only the announcement of Corona aid could convince the other states of such drastic measures (Riedel 6/2020: 16).

Sweden, which has so far waived a lockdown, remained an exception. It may have resisted the temptation of money printing by the ECB because it is not part of the euro area. This aspect is significant, after all, MMT representatives in the USA as well as in Germany point out that only states with their own currency can get into such debt (Ehnts/Paetz 2021: 200): As a currency monopolist, the state can withdraw the money put into circulation again via taxes and thus prevent inflation (sueddeutsche.de, 16.12.2018). At this point, one waits in vain for the decisive hint that the euro area can actually only apply MMT once it has first communitarised fiscal policy. At present, however, there is rather a tendency towards tax dumping: "Countries like Ireland, Luxembourg or the Netherlands have attracted international corporations with lucrative tax models." (die presse.com, 17.7.2020) And according to the ruling of the European Court of Justice of 15.7.2020, this is also completely legal (dejure.org). The danger of inflation of the euro is therefore not over. There is a threat of tax increases or spending cuts (welt.de, 6.10.2020, Figure 7).

For this reason, it remains necessary to examine opposing measures in order to minimise the risks of this historical experiment. The argument that the US experience in dealing with high public debt cannot simply be transferred to other countries gives rise to thought. The US dollar enjoys a privileged position because, despite competition from the euro and the yuan, it is still the world's most important reserve currency, and many countries have aligned themselves with it (Huber 5/2019). Because they either have their own currency pegged to the US dollar or are indebted in a foreign currency, MMT is out of the question for them. On the contrary, it is precisely in times of crisis like today in the Corona Crisis that this great financial dependence takes its revenge. Worries about payment defaults have caused "almost 30 per cent of capital to flow out of emerging economies worldwide since the beginning of the year [2020]" (dw.com, 23.10.2020). This has triggered a currency collapse in Turkey, Brazil and South Africa that is affecting the very existence of these countries.

Figure 7

#### Dept Level of the Eurozone / EU19 (2000–2020) in Million Euros



Source: Own compilation, Eurostat, 22.4.2021

Thomas Mayer:

#### MMT as the new monetary policy. The ECB has voluntarily submitted to politics

„[...] Of course, those responsible would reject it, but in fact the ECB and other large central banks have switched their monetary policy strategy to the "Modern Monetary Theory" (MMT) that has become fashionable in the USA.

The name of this concept is misleading, because it is neither "modern" nor a "monetary theory". What is meant is the old-fashioned practice of financing the state with the printing press. According to MMT's ideas, the central bank should create money for the state, which then circulates it through its spending.

The ECB has already taken the first step by buying bonds from euro states worth around 2.7 trillion euros. According to the wishes of Lagarde and Schnabel, the states should distribute the money to the people in a second step.

Since the distribution of money is not so easy without effective organisation, it sometimes does not flow as quickly as desired. But supplies from the central bank are provided for, and in the end there will be no shortage of willing borrowers.

In contrast to old-style monetary state financing, in MMT the state is supposed to prevent an inflationary expansion of the money supply by reducing spending or raising taxes after the inflation target has been reached.

Then less fresh money would come into circulation. That is the theory. But politicians have hardly ever been capable of such discipline – which is why they have removed the central banks from their access in order to commit themselves. If the central bankers lure the politicians back onto the path of monetary state financing, they destroy this self-binding.

The architects of the monetary union have set up strong firewalls between politics and the ECB. They did not expect the ECB to submit to politics of its own free will.

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Source: welt.de, 6.10.2020

[Translation and highlighting blue: S.R.].

MMT is proving to be an approach that has become popular worldwide with the Corona crisis, but cannot fulfil the expectations that have been raised. After all, the decisive prerequisite for unlimited national debt is a sovereign state with its own monetary and financial policy without being dependent on foreign currencies. This condition is only met by the USA, if one ignores the many critical objections ([bloomberg.com](https://www.bloomberg.com), 21.3.2019). The EU members of the euro area and many emerging countries, on the other hand, are taking incalculable risks with MMT. Why don't the European countries draw on their own historical experience? Already 100 years ago, the Austrian School of National Economics analysed the financial policy background of the First World War. Its prominent representative, Ludwig von Mises, saw a direct connection between the policy of "cheap money" and militarism ([Mises 1919](#): 5). Because without financial supplies, the population would have felt the effects of the war on their prosperity much more quickly (op. cit., 133). However, the theory of "inflationism" threw sand in their eyes. Von Mises understands this to be a "theory of money that aims to increase the money supply" ([Mises 1924](#): 203). It was founded at that time by the German national economist Georg Friedrich Knapp (Knapp 1905, [Knapp 1924](#)). If today's MMT refers to Knapp as its predecessor ([faz.net](#), 18.1.2012), a discussion about this is urgently needed.

#### 4. Structural analysis reveals parallel structures of the authoritarian dual state

Germany financed the First World War with the policy of "cheap money" and accumulated debts with foreign bonds, the last instalment of which was only repaid in 2010 ([welt.de](#), 30.12.2009). Another important source of income for the German Empire was domestic debt, i.e. from its own population, through war bonds, which the Weimar Republic got rid of after the end of the war through inflation ([tagesspiegel.de](#), 16.11.2008). That is why the National Socialists (1933-1945) took other paths for their rearmament. They inflated the money supply through government bonds, which savings banks, banks and insurance companies were forced to take up. To do this, they had to eliminate the Reichsbank, which had the legal mandate to prevent renewed national debt. Step by step, they subordinated the financial and economic system to their control and were thus able to conceal the inflationary consequences: "Rationing, price and wage freezes ensured that inflation and price increases remained hidden well into the war." ([Prollius](#), 18.6.2014)

Walter Eucken, the mastermind of the successful model of the social market economy after the Second World War, coined the term "suppressed inflation" for this. (Eucken 1951: 53 f). It arises when prices are fixed politically at the same time as the money supply is expanded. According to Eucken, this leads to an "economic order of central planning" which favours the formation of monopolies to the detriment of the market order (p. 55). For this reason, he sees structural similarities between the centrally administered economy of Soviet-type socialism and the Nazi regime (Eucken 1959: 140). Both had destroyed the market-based monetary system, even if they differed fundamentally on the question of property.

In contrast to the German Empire, Russia or the later Soviet Union was faced with the task of industrialising an agricultural country at the end of the First World War. This partly explains the Bolsheviks' approach to economic policy, "to organise the whole national economy along the lines of the post office" (quoted from: op. cit.). The Weimar Republic, on the other hand, was a highly developed industrial country that was able to bring its production level back to pre-war levels by 1927. ([dhm.de](#), 27.4.2021). However, the new democratic system showed weaknesses because a parliamentary majority of communists and national socialists rejected the austerity policy of the Brüning government. The dispute over the payment of foreign debts and measures against inflation led to a political crisis and shortly afterwards to dictatorship.

From a research perspective, the interesting question is how the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) established its new regime from 1933 onwards. For this purpose, Ernst Fraenkel uses the analytical concept of the dual state. He does not assume a linear process of change, but describes the establishment of a second, parallel structure of rule (Fraenkel: 1940, cf. Figure 8). The old legal order initially persisted, deceiving a broad public, especially at the beginning of the seizure of power (in 1933). Fraenkel called it the *normative state*, defining it as "the system of government endowed with extensive powers of rule for the purpose of maintaining the legal order, as expressed in laws, court decisions and administrative acts of the executive" (quoted from: Fraenkel 1940: 49). In addition, the *state of instrumental measures* emerged as an "organ of dictatorship" with the NSDAP at its head. It was a "system of rule of unrestricted arbitrariness and violence, unrestricted by any legal guarantees" (op. cit.).



In this specific case, the concept of the dual state was used to analyse the totalitarian structure of the Nazi dictatorship (Schapiro 1972). But what lessons can be learned from this research? Can this concept be generalised and applied to other case studies? This is possible if one does not limit the *state of instrumental measures* to this historically defined type of "unlimited arbitrariness and tyranny". If it is defined as a second *level of rule without democratic legitimacy, on which arbitrary measures are implemented against the existing legal order (normative state)*, one can speak of a dual state in which authoritarian structures of rule evolve.

In view of the EU's policy of "cheap money" since the global financial crisis (2008), it is worth examining the question: Has the EU already created such a state-like dual structure in the course of its financial aid for over-indebted member states? Has a second *structure of instrumental measures* already emerged within the EU system that evades democratic control by parliaments, violates the EU treaties (here: *normative structure*) and acts arbitrarily? A look at the construction of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) and the Corona Recovery Fund (PEPP) should provide more clarity here. This is not only of scientific interest, but also for the future of European integration. For if some European politicians have their way, the EU is to be transformed from a confederation of states into a sovereign state. According to Ernst Fraenkel's structural analysis, however, an authoritarian European *dual state* could emerge, threatening the normative state, i.e. the values anchored in the EU treaties such as democracy, the rule of law and subsidiarity, as well as the national parliaments.

So far, there have been no majorities for a reform of the EU Treaty of Lisbon (2009) that would have triggered such a state-building process. Nevertheless, in order to advance the project of European integration, some EU members deepened their intergovernmental cooperation in partial policy fields. As a reaction to the financial crisis (2008) and the Greek crisis (2010), closer cooperation between the EU states with the euro as their currency emerged. They set up a temporary European Financial Stability Mechanism (EFSM, also known as the "rescue package", [EFSM, 24.5.2021](#), [Meyer 3/2011](#)). In 2012, this aid architecture for Greece became a "permanent crisis management mechanism" ([ESM, 31.12.2020](#), [EU-Commission, ESM](#); [esm.europa.eu](#)): Although the European Council of all EU heads of state and government (EU27) assesses the ESM positively ([europa.eu, 1.2.2021](#)), it only applies to the coun-

tries of the euro area (E19 or Eurogroup), but not to the eight other EU countries with their own currencies (Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria).

In addition to this political factor, there is also a legal aspect, which is why the ESM Treaty (2012) created a second, parallel financial structure: As an international treaty, it is outside EU law, so that related legal disputes cannot be heard before the European Court of Justice (ECJ). But that is not all: the ESM Treaty guarantees the Directors, the Board of Governors and its staff immunity "from legal proceedings" and "inviolability in respect of their official papers and documents" (Article 35 [ESM-Treaty](#), see also [welt.de, 8.7.2012](#)). Their authority is therefore obliged to

Figure 8

### The Dual State (Ernst Fraenkel 1940)

Foreword of the publisher to the 2nd edition (2001)  
Alexander von Brünneck:

#### 2. Thesis and approach of the dual state

The thesis of the dual state\* is that the Nazi system of rule splits into two large areas: *In the normative state, old and new regulations apply to the extent necessary for the functionality of the economic system based on predictability*, which in principle continues to be structured according to private capital. *In the state of instrumental measures, the Nazi functionaries act independently of all formal rules and substantive notions of justice* as they see fit to maintain their power and to implement their specific political goals - e.g. the persecution of the Jews. *In case of doubt, the principles of the state of instrumental measures prevail over those of the normative state*. This frame of reference has proven to be plausible in many empirical and theoretical studies.\*

What is specific about Fraenkel's approach is the special form of its empirical approach: *He describes the functioning of the Nazi system of rule* from the direct view of someone who lives and suffers with it. [...]

Fraenkel explains the phenomenon of the dual state on several levels: *He derives the dual state from social, economic and political interests*. He develops the dual state from the German state tradition and from the German anti-democratic ideologies, as they had found their expression decisively in Carl Schmitt.

[...] *The dual state was concerned with investigating the forms of appearance and reasons for the destruction of pluralism. For this question, the approach developed in the Dual State provides an original concept that is still valid today*. Ernst Fraenkel's Doppelstaat is a standard work on politics, justice and law in the Nazi regime. In the USA, Germany and Italy, The Dual State achieved the rank of a classic in the literature on the Nazi era.

Source: Ernst Fraenkel, Der Doppelstaat, Zweite durchgesehene Auflage, Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Alexander v. Brünneck, Hamburg 2001, S. 11f.

[\* are footnotes, translation and highlighting blue: S.R.].

publish documents that they themselves consider to be important for the democratic "decision-making process" ([sueddeutsche.de](https://www.sueddeutsche.de), 13.11. 2012).

Figure 9

**The Federal Audit Office on the possible effects of the Corona reconstruction fund on the federal budget**

„0. Summary [...]

0.1 For the first time in its history, the European Union will raise substantial funds on the capital market through EU bonds and make them available to member states as grants. The EU bonds are not repaid directly by the recipients of the grants, but through the EU budget. As a result, the reconstruction fund organises debt-financed transfers between the member states. In addition, the EU budget is liable for all EU bonds issued by the fund. Experience shows that instruments introduced in times of crisis regularly become permanent. It is often neglected that these instruments are sometimes associated with costs and risks that can be justified in the crisis, but not in the long run. [...]

0.2 The EU budget should guarantee the debts of the reconstruction fund. As a result, the member states are jointly liable for these debts through their future contributions to the EU budget. *If a member state can no longer or no longer wishes to meet its payment obligations, the other states must assume responsibility for its share of the debt without requiring renewed consent on their part.* Such a liability regime sets the wrong impulses and weakens the Economic and Monetary Union. [...]

0.3 *Member states have adopted binding fiscal rules to limit their public deficits and debt levels. Such rules do not exist for debts of the European Union.* The reconstruction fund thus opens up a way for states to get into debt at the EU level by circumventing the fiscal rules. To prevent this, the repayment obligations of the member states resulting from the Fund's debt should be offset against their respective national debt levels. Then the fiscal rules could take effect and have a disciplining effect. [...]

0.4 The EU bonds for the grants are to be repaid via the EU budget in the period 2028 to 2058. However, it is currently still open what share will be allocated to the individual member states, as this will only be the subject of future negotiations on the financing of the European Union. The EU budget should also guarantee for all debts of the reconstruction fund. For this purpose, the so-called ceiling of own resources is to be increased. *This allows the European Union to fall back on an enormous guarantee volume of at least 4,000 billion euros from the member states through the EU budget. This corresponds to a multiple of the volume actually needed and is not necessary to this extent.* It could also fuel speculation about an already planned expansion of debt at EU level. Therefore, this ceiling should be significantly reduced. In addition, the expected burdens for the member states to repay the EU bonds should already be set out in a binding repayment plan.“

Source: BRH 11.3.2021: Bericht zu den möglichen Auswirkungen der gemeinschaftlichen Kreditaufnahme der Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union auf den Bundeshaushalt (Wiederaufbaufonds), 11.3.2021, S. 4 [translation and highlighting blue: S.R.].

Immunity and lack of transparency create the impression that the EMS has something to hide. This is confirmed by the following points: Because the Treaty is not subject to EU law, the ESM can override the ban on the purchase of government bonds to which the European Central Bank is subject under Article 123 (TFEU, Figure 10). The Eurogroup can, however, borrow "new euro area government bonds" and delegate the management of these funds to the ECB and the European Commission (ESM Treaty (10) and (11), Wiesner 2016). There is no upper limit for this in the text of the contract (Article 21).

Although Article 8 limits the liability risk of each member to its share of the capital stock, it will increase if other contracting states become insolvent. Germany could therefore face up to 700 billion euros instead of 190 (BMF, 1.8.2017). In addition, France and Italy were able to prevail with the proposal to provide the ESM with a banking licence ([spiegel.de](https://www.spiegel.de), 31.7.2012). This means that the ESM can take on unlimited loans and thus become a "bad bank": "Article 19 also allows the rescue of insolvent banks without amending the treaty ([welt.de](https://www.welt.de), 4.9.2012).

Figure 10 shows that democratic control mechanisms exist that could have prevented the transfer of national financial sovereignty to the ESM as a new supranational European financial institution. However, Germany was under enormous pressure to act in solidarity and help indebted European states in their trouble ([eu-bayern.de](https://www.eu-bayern.de) 28.2.2013). In German parliaments, the phrase "Europe needs solidarity" was also critically questioned: with the approval of the ESM, "ever greater liability risks" would be passed on to the taxpayers and "blatant reductions in democracy" would be accepted (Runge 4.7.2012: 10). But the Federal Constitutional Court rejected all complaints ([sueddeutsche.de](https://www.sueddeutsche.de), 12.9.2012), so that the ESM came into force with a two-thirds majority of the Bundestag ([bundestag.de](https://www.bundestag.de), 18.3.2014).

Complaints before the European Court of Justice against the ESM were also unsuccessful. The ECJ only stated that Union law did not contradict the ESM Treaty and that it was not competent "in the area of the coordination of the economic policies of the Member States" (ECJ, 27.11.2012). Under the EU treaties, economic policy competences are in national hands. Therefore, the euro states (E19) decided to organise closer cooperation in this policy field outside the EU system. However, if the ESM disregards European values such as "democracy, equality, the rule of law" (Article 2 TEU), it is not only anti-democratic, but also anti-European: Its newly created authority

operates in a lawless space without democratic control and increases inequality within the EU27.

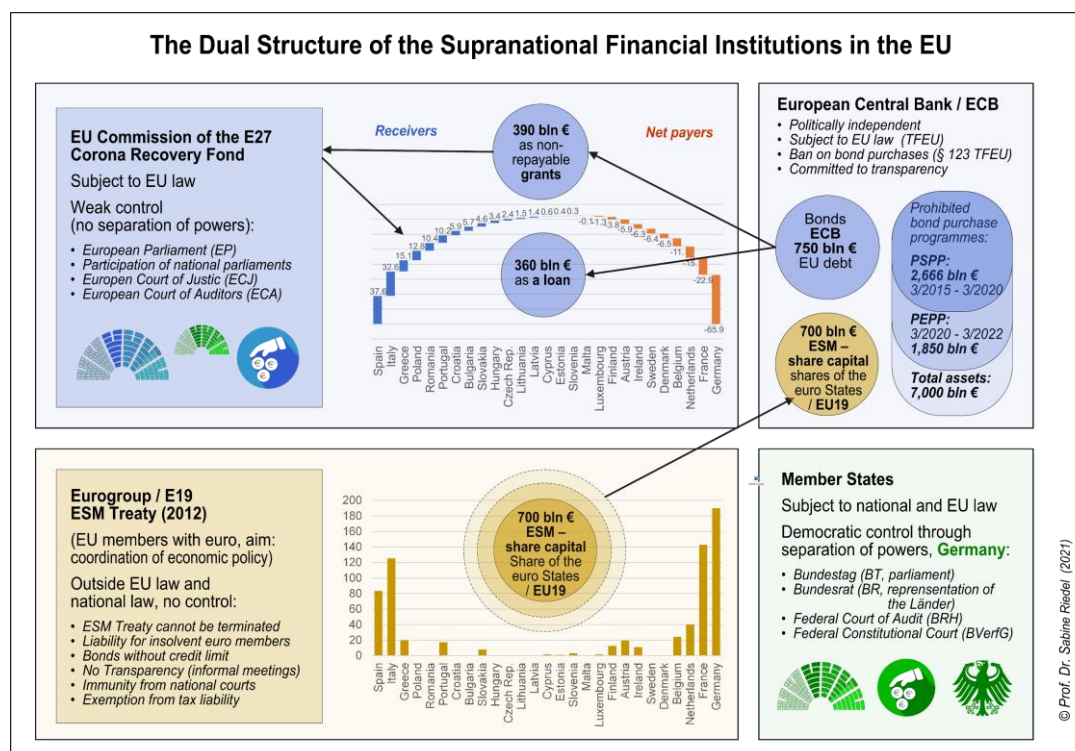
Since the beginning of the Corona crisis in mid-March 2020, the character of the ESM as a *structure of instrumental measures* and competitor to the European *normative structure* has emerged more clearly than ever. Only a few years ago, the EU Commission hoped to soon incorporate the ESM into Union law and to further develop this instrument for the benefit of all EU members (BRH, 27.5.2019: 8). But the Eurogroup rejected this proposal and instead headed for a reform of the ESM Treaty that will give them and their directors even more power. Thereafter, the ESM will soon also be available to the non-euro members (flossbachvonstorch.de, 13.12.2019, Schorkopf 2020, Meyer 22.10.2020). In addition, close cooperation with the EU Commission and the ECB is envisaged, although this treaty remains outside European and national law.

Italy blocked these ESM reform projects for a long time until the Eurogroup was able to reach an agreement at the end of 2020 (zeit.de, 30.11.2020). The ECB's Corona Recovery Fund may have provided support here. After all, Italy is the biggest beneficiary of this aid money with 209 billion euros (cf. Figure 10). It should be recalled

that the Governing Council of the ECB had already decided on the "package of monetary policy measures" of 750 billion euros on 12.3.2020 (ECB, 12.2.2020), although at that time only four states of the EU27 had decided on a lock-down to combat the pandemic, including the two members of the Eurogroup Austria and Italy. Coincidentally, former Vice-President of the Bank of Italy Fabio Panetta had been appointed to the five-member ECB Executive Board at the beginning of 2020, which is represented on the Governing Council and helped launch the aid money.

It can be assumed that with these new aid funds, the economic and financial policies of the EU27 as representatives of the *normative structure* will increasingly come under the influence of the EU19 *structure of instrumental measures* and be exposed to the arbitrariness of ESM policy. This is indicated by the statement of EU Finance Commissioner Johannes Hahn, who advocates a softening of the stability criteria (Maastricht criteria) at a time when the EU is developing into a liability union contrary to its treaties (welt.de, 2.5.2021). Hahn is only following the agenda of the ESM Treaty, which does not link access to loans to any economic policy conditions (cep.eu, 11.12.2019: 9). Another indication is the arbitrary-

Figure 10



Source: Own compilation, BRH, 11.3.2021, bundestag.de, 14.10.2014, Wiesner 2016, europa.eu, 9.11.2017, welt.de, 4.9.2012, statistica.com, 17.7.2020.

ness with which the Corona aid money is disbursed. After the Italian government broke up over this issue in early 2021, Mario Draghi, ex-ECB president and new head of government, will spend it on infrastructure projects.

### 5. Uncontrolled Bio-power (Foucault) threatens humans as living beings

The E19 euro area, based on the [ESM Treaty](#) and its cooperation of economic and fiscal policy, could become a blueprint for other policy areas, including a European health policy. When the European Commission announces the "creation of a European Health Union" in a press release ([europa.eu, 11.11.2020](#)), the EU members should pause and first evaluate their experiences. Some integration projects that started with treaties outside EU law according to the method of differentiated integration ([bundestag.de, 27.10.2020](#)) did more harm than good: Thus, the ESM authority, as outlined above, acts according to its own law, and members of the [Schengen Borders Code](#) (2016) are in dispute about the agreed legal norms ([Riedel S23/2020, Riedel 12/2020:2](#)). The first thing to clarify would be whether the Commission's proposal must be understood as a new project of differentiated integration and what alternatives there are to it.

Since the ESM and Schengen treaties were initiated by EU members through the European Council, its corona policy should be examined. Following this, the Council, as an organ of the EU, has so far only acted in a coordinating manner, i.e. it doesn't speak of a "health union" in the sense of a new level of integration. However, a timeline of its activities shows the dominant role that the E19 Eurogroup played in overcoming the crisis ([EC Timeline](#)): On 4.3.2020, five days before Italy became the first EU member to apply lockdown, the Chair of the ESM Board of Governors made an important announcement to the EU27: The EU19 have decided to weaken the Stability and Growth Pact for the "wellbeing of our citizens". The other eight non-euro states can follow them ([EC, 4.3.2020](#)). This means that the Eurogroup gave the go-ahead for unrestrained government debt for the entire EU, which the ECB would only approve days later (see above). According to the announcement, the decision was taken after a conference call, there was no mention of a risk analysis, in which usually damage amounts are estimated or alternative measures are discussed.

The price for the subsequent lockdown will not only be reflected in horrific euro sums. The real currency in which EU citizens will pay off these

debts is their health data. As two Hessian ministers recently wrote: „Data has long since become the most valuable currency of digitalisation and numerous companies have recognised this value.“ ([Puttrich/Sinemus, 27.4.2021](#)) With their statement, they started an all-German initiative against a "commercialisation of human dignity", which would lead to a division of society into "people who are valuable in terms of health and those who are less valuable" ([zeit.de, 28.4.2021](#)). Insurance companies of all kinds can already offer their customers policies that are tailored to their health using algorithms and thus offer advantages. In the future, such math operations will even be used to map a patient's entire personality and ultimately give him a "digital identity" that replaces ID cards ([Kruchem 19.10.2020](#)). State administrations are also hoping for this and are reassuring concerned citizens with the Data Protection Regulation ([DSGVO](#)) and "informational self-determination" ([BMI-Projekt, 2021](#)).

Under current European and national law, the Hessian initiative has a good chance of success, because German health policy lies within the competence of the responsible state ministries. They supervise the health authorities and are responsible for all hospitals ([vdek.com, 24.8.2018](#)). Article 6 a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU also recognizes that the Member States are responsible for "protection and improvement of human health" ([TFEU](#)). The supranational level can only provide support (cf. in more detail [Riedel 6/2020: 7](#)). The Commission's proposal for an EU Health Union violates these principles: it is not so much about cooperation between the members, but rather Brussels wants to change the "existing legal framework" and thus take over health policy competences ([europa.eu, 11.11.2020](#), Figure 11).

Whether the Commission's right of initiative is sufficient for this project ([Article 17 \(2\) TEU](#)) remains to be seen. One thing is certain: many projects have failed because the member states have not given their consent. These stopped transfers of competences to the European Asylum Support Office ([EASO](#)), the European Border and Coast Guard Agency ([FRONTEX](#)) or to [eu-LISA](#). The last mentioned agency for large-scale IT systems is to link six different databases with one another and make available "hundreds of millions of data records" ([augsburger-allgemeine.de, 16.4.2019](#)). Data protectionists are alarmed and fear "comprehensive mass surveillance", according to former Federal Data Protection Commissioner Peter Schaar ([buzzfeed.de, 19.12.2020, eaid-berlin.de](#)). This does not bode well for the desired "European health security". According to



this, national prevention plans are to be drawn up, monitored by the EU and subjected to stress tests. An "integrated surveillance system [...] using artificial intelligence and other advanced technological means" is also planned ([europa.eu, 11.11.2020](https://europa.eu/11.11.2020), Figure 11). So it is less about a central collection, storage and management of health data for the purpose of preventing "cross-border health threats" (op. cit.). The declared aim is the technical processing and application of such data for the purpose of controlling health care institutions and possibly also the citizens themselves.

Given the way in which European and national data protection principles are currently being violated, there is cause for concern that the EU initiative will focus less on prevention and more on control. The current Federal Commissioner for Data Protection (BfDI), Ulrich Kelber, criticised the fact that his comments on data protection deficits were hardly heard during the revision of the Infection Protection Act (IfSG) 2020. He criticised that the obligation to report threatening diseases has been extended to suspected cases and that even negative test results are passed on to the authorities. This is a violation of the fundamental right to "informational self-determination" ([Kelber 30.4.2020](https://www.kelber.de/30.4.2020)).

The changes to the IfSG, however, went much further. From now on, politics decides who among the population is sick, a potential danger or healthy. They removed from the medical profession the competence and the professional privilege to certify illnesses. Only since the authorities have had the power to define illness could a social discourse develop that speaks of "asymptomatic courses of illness" ([fr.de, 19.2.2021](https://www.fr.de/19.2.2021)). This contradicts even the definition from an epidemiological point of view, according to which symptoms must be present in order to diagnose a "health disorder" (RKI 2015: 83). So anyone who has no symptoms is not ill, even if he may be carrying pathogens. The discussion about asymptomatic covid-19 diseases is the attempt of a social attribution that violates the fundamental right of the individual to self-determination.

What such self-empowerment of politics means in regard to the health status of human beings and where this can lead to was discussed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault more than half a century ago. His reflections on bio-power and its political abuse are particularly valuable in today's Corona crisis. Although they are difficult to reduce to a few key sentences, their most important statements are clear to identify: While the fight against deadly diseases was the focus up to the 18th century, since then "a kind of

nationalisation of the biological" can be observed, which appropriates and politically controls people's lives (Foucault 1976). Such a "seizure of power" can take extreme forms if control mechanisms are missing or removed. Foucault sees one pole in the possibility of destroying life in terms of the whole of humanity by using nuclear weapons.

Figure 11

### European Commission: Building a European Health Union

[...] Today's proposals focus on revamping the existing legal framework for serious cross border threats to health, as well as reinforcing the crisis preparedness and response role of key EU agencies, namely the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

#### A stronger EU health security framework

To create a more robust mandate for coordination by the Commission and EU agencies, the Commission is today proposing a **new Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health**. The new framework will:

- **Strengthen preparedness:** EU health crisis and pandemic preparedness plan and recommendations will be developed for the adoption of plans at national levels, coupled with comprehensive and transparent frameworks for reporting and auditing. [The preparation of national plans](#) would be supported by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and other EU agencies. [The plans would be audited and stress tested by the Commission and EU agencies.](#)
- **Reinforce surveillance:** [A strengthened, integrated surveillance system will be created at EU level, using artificial intelligence and other advanced technological means.](#)
- **Improve data reporting:** Member States will be required to step up their reporting of health systems indicators (e.g. hospital beds availability, specialised treatment and intensive care capacity, number of medically trained staff etc.).
- [The declaration of an EU emergency situation would trigger increased coordination and allow for the development, stockpiling and procurement of crisis relevant products.](#)

#### Stronger and more operational EU Agencies

The European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and the European Medicines Agency have been at the forefront of the EU's work to address COVID-19 since the outbreak of the pandemic. However, [COVID-19 has shown that both agencies need to be reinforced and equipped with stronger mandates](#) to better protect EU citizens and address cross border health threats. [...]

The Commission is also today setting out the main elements of the future Health Emergency Response Authority (HERA), to be proposed by the end of 2021. [...]

Source: European Commission, Press release, [Building a European Health Union](#): Stronger crisis preparedness and response for Europe, Brussels, 11.11.2020 [Highlighting blue: S.R.].

The other extreme is the preservation of life by using technologies to "produce the living and fabricate the monstrous and – not least – uncontrollable and universally destructive viruses" (op. cit.).

These sentences are of particular importance in the age of digitalisation and the Corona pandemic. They not only remind us of the importance of a functioning division of power and the limitation of state power to prevent the encroachment of bio-power on human self-determination. They also anticipate the topic as a global phenomenon: the successful attempt of such a "seizure of power over humans as living beings" in one country of the earth is enough to destroy the existence

of the entire human race. For this reason, Foucault dealt with the bio-power of National Socialism. He saw the Nazi dictatorship as a combination of both extreme poles, the right to kill and the right to preserve life according to its racist world view (op. cit.).

Based on Foucault's approach, various aspects of the global corona policy can be questioned. A first direct connection is the current scientific dispute about the four original hypotheses of the corona virus. As was pointed out in the first chapter of this article, the laboratory hypothesis that Covid-19 could be an artificially produced virus has not yet been disproved. To speak with Foucault, we are dealing here with an extreme pole of bio-politics that threatens not only individual groups of people in their biological existence, but humanity as a whole. Therefore, it is not enough to solve the riddle of the origin of the virus, but scientists should be heard who, in the Corona crisis, demand transparency and control in the research of biological weapons in order to minimise these risks. (Wiesendanger 2021).

In Corona politics, not only this extreme pole of bio-politics comes to light, where an uncontrolled bio-power could create artificial, deadly viruses. The attempt to preserve life can also take on extreme forms, speaking with Foucault, if a person is restricted in his/her self-determination or even made dependent on medication. After these considerations, the current vaccination policy should be viewed with much more scepticism. Where is a society headed that may have to be vaccinated against coronaviruses every year? A research team at Berlin's Charité University thinks this is likely after comparing "land-borne cold coronaviruses" with flu viruses ([charite.de, 25.3.2021](https://www.charite.de/2021/03/25/)). Are citizens facing more "compulsory vaccinations"? After consulting medical experts, the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health has made a clear decision and spoken out against compulsory vaccination: "The authorities have decided in favour of the ethical principle of self-determination." ([infovac.ch, 22.10.2020](https://www.infovac.ch/2021/10/22/))

The popular terms "completely inoculating" instead of vaccination or "herd immunity" instead of social protection already belong to the vocabulary of authoritarian thinking. They come from veterinary medicine and cause dehumanization and turn people into animals, so to speak. It is surprising how state institutions (see [RKI, Risikobewertung](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikobewertung.html)) and the media use these inhumane words and promote animal welfare and environmental protection elsewhere. The Robert Koch Institute (RKI) has a special responsibility to distance itself from its involvement in the Nazi regime. However,

Figure 12

### Michel Foucault: Defence of Society

„It seems to me that one of the fundamental phenomena of the 19th century was and still is what might be called the **appropriation of life by power**: if you like, a **seizure of power over the human being as a living being**, a **kind of nationalisation of the biological**, or at least a certain tendency towards what could be called the nationalisation of the biological. [...]

At this point towards the end of the 18th century, it is not about epidemics, but about something else that could be called endemics, that is, the form, nature, extent, duration and intensity of the diseases prevalent in a population. **More or less difficult to eradicate diseases which, unlike epidemics, are not considered from the perspective of increasing causes of death**, but as permanent factors - that is how they are treated - of deprivation of strength, reduction of working time, loss of energy and economic costs, because of the shortages they produce as much as the care they can cost. **In short, illness as a population phenomenon: no longer as death that brutally lays on life - that is the epidemic - but as permanent death that slips into life, constantly devouring it, diminishing and weakening it.** [...]

We are thus inside a power that has taken over the body and life, or that has taken over life in general, if you like, with the poles of the body on one side and the population on the other. **It is therefore a bio-power whose paradoxes, arising at the limit of its exercise, can be easily recognised.** [...]

At the other extreme, you no longer have the encroachment of sovereign right over bio-power, but the encroachment of bio-power over sovereign right. This encroachment of bio-power occurs when humans are given the technical and political **possibility not only to master life, but also to reproduce it, to produce living things and monstrous and – not least – to fabricate uncontrollable and universally destructive viruses.** Terrible expansion of bio-power which, contrary to what I just said about nuclear power, will swamp the whole human sovereignty."

Source: Michel Foucault, Verteidigung der Gesellschaft. In Vorlesung vom 17. März 1976, S. 1 und S. 14, Übersetzung: Herbert Gottweiss, see also: Andreas Folkers und Thomas Lemke (Ed.), Biopolitik. Ein Reader, Berlin, 2. Auflage 2020, p. 88-114 [Translation and highlighting blue: S.R.].

it is not enough to document and condemn the RKI's complicity in human experiments with vaccines against typhus. (RKI, 29.3.2011: 15). It is crucial to draw conclusions from this to protect a free society and to follow positive examples such as Switzerland. But this is where the fact-checking of the public service media has not yet arrived. On the contrary, journalists excuse the mishaps of the Central Vaccination Commission (CC) in the approval of the AstraZeneca vaccine with the words: "Yes, has someone been sloppy? No, we're just experiencing medical research in real time." ([tagesschau.de](https://www.tagesschau.de/31.3.2021), 31.3.2021, 22:35, from min. 9:31) Media are currently shaking the last taboo on vaccinating children ([mittelbayerische.de](https://www.mittelbayerische.de/3.5.2021), 3.5.2021), even though doctors know that Covid-19 is hardly dangerous for them, but that the risk of side effects is much higher than average ([individuelle-impfentscheidung.de](https://www.individuelle-impfentscheidung.de/13.5.2021), 13.5.2021, [epoch-times.de](https://www.epoch-times.de/6.5.2021), 6.5.2021).

It was not without reason that doctors learned their lessons from the Nazi dictatorship and drafted the Nuremberg Code in 1947. Here "human experiments" in research projects are linked to ten clearly formulated criteria: This includes the voluntary participation of test subjects in such programmes, other preliminary tests, e.g. with animals, the exclusion of possible consequential damage or death of the test subjects and preparatory measures to be able to stop the tests at any time. These criteria are rarely taken to heart in the current vaccination campaign. Therefore, doctors from Europe and North America turned to the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and asked, among others, for the test results that led to the approval of the four vaccines, but were left without a satisfactory answer ([doctors4covidethics.org](https://www.doctors4covidethics.org/1.4.2021), 1.4.2021). It is already known, however, that the rapid approval was only made possible by "pushing test phases into one another", which is why consequential damage can only occur later, "with the current procedure, that is, when millions of people have already been vaccinated" ([fr.de](https://www.fr.de/8.4.2021), 8.4.2021). The authorities do not make any statements on the subject of long-term effects, although doctors warn that inflammations caused by nanoparticles or autoimmune diseases can only occur after vaccination ([zm-online.de](https://www.zm-online.de/22.1.2021), 22.1.2021). All that remains is to look at official statistics: After that, the EMA reported exactly 364,000 cases of reported side effects by 1.5.2021 ([adrreports.eu](https://www.adrreports.eu/1.5.2021), 1.5.2021), and the German Paul Ehrlich Institute (PEI) reported exactly 49,961 cases a few days later in the period 27.12.2020 – 30.4.2021, of which around 10 per cent involved "serious reactions" or 524 deaths ([pei.de](https://www.pei.de/7.5.2021), 7.5.2021: 11f.).

## 6. Transhumanism – a seizure of power on the human soul

While health politicians of the governing parties in Germany still disputed the effectiveness and necessity of compulsory vaccination and immunity cards until the end of 2020 ([merkur.de](https://www.merkur.de/7.5.2020), 7.5.2020, [zdf.de](https://www.zdf.de/22.11.2020), 22.11.2020), these topics are now at the top of their list of priorities. On 7.5.2021, a law cleared the last hurdle in the Federal Council, according to which exit bans are lifted and other restrictive measures relaxed for "those who have been completely vaccinated and those who have recovered from Corona" ([welt.de](https://www.welt.de/5.5.2021), 5.5.2021). A reader commented astutely on this decision in the internet edition of a daily newspaper, saying: "The term 'relaxations' in this context comes from the penal system. Question: So are we all prisoners?" (op. cit.) This sentence vividly reflects the mood of a population marked by fear and stress.

The more lockdowns there are and the longer they last, the more people's psyches suffer. A special survey by the German Depression Aid Foundation in February 2021 gives concrete figures on this: "71% of German citizens find the situation in the second lockdown depressing." ([deutsche-depressionshilfe.de](https://www.deutsche-depressionshilfe.de/7.5.2020), 7.5.2020) Every third person worries about his/her professional future, in addition to family burdens of various kinds. Those 5.3 million who already have to cope with depression suffer particularly: 16 % have a relapse, 8 % are at risk of suicide (op. cit.). Other press articles report that 80 percent of doctors observe an increase in depression among their patients, 70 percent speak of an increase in sleep disorders. A quarter of doctors prescribe more medication ([tagesspiegel.de](https://www.tagesspiegel.de/8.12.2020), 8.12.2020). So tablet addiction is also growing and with it the number of addicts, which was already around 3.5 million before the start of the Corona crisis, with a probably much higher unreported number (as of 2015 [medikamente-und-sucht.de](https://www.medikamente-und-sucht.de)).

After a year of contradictory pandemic measures, an already destabilised society is now finally being deprived of the hope of returning to a normal life soon. The prospect of only regaining basic rights as a vaccinated or recovered person triggers fears of a society whose members will be kept alive and functioning with drugs in the future. A Corona policy that prevents healthy people from keeping their immune systems intact and sick people from regaining their balance and leading independent and self-determined lives has long lost sight of the humanistic standards of free societies. It now allows research into "self-spreading vaccines" that could endanger both risk groups and healthy people (Nuismer, Bull 2020;

[epochtimes.de](https://www.epochtimes.de), 9.5.2021). This blurs the line between threatening viruses, whether of natural or artificial origin, and their supposed antidotes. South Africa has already had bitter experiences with the use of an infertility vaccine under apartheid ([unidir.org](https://www.unidir.org), 20.12.2002). Research into such "spillover" vaccines sheds new light on the laboratory hypothesis of the origin of the corona virus (see above, cf. [Wiesendanger 2021](https://www.wiesendanger.de)).

The destruction of the immune system is inevitably followed by the dissolution of social relationships, as euphemistically described and even recommended as "social distancing". The Austrian writer Hermann Broch, a contemporary witness

and himself a persecutee by the Nazi dictatorship, has artistically and scientifically worked on the mechanisms and social consequences of an "ego narrowing", as it is also experienced today under Corona conditions. His central idea is that people in a state of permanent fear experience a deprivation of values. All paths for ego development are cut off, namely the appropriation of the material world (material possessions, consumption and power), intellectual engagement (spiritual creativity and knowledge) and the cultivation of social relationships (as emotional expansion through friendships and intimate relationships). Under such extreme conditions, society becomes a manipulable mass to which the individual must subordinate himself: "The individual lacks, loses or renounces his intellectual and moral personality values, i.e. spirit, will and responsibility". (Ritzer 2016: 442, cf. Figure 13)

This is not only reminiscent of the surveillance state as described by George Orwell in his future novel "1984". A society consisting only of drug addicts fits the vision of transhumanism. Then, humanity is facing a new evolutionary stage in which humans and (medical) technology will soon merge with each other. Transhumanists are already active in foundations, movements and parties to spread their messages such as the "cyborgisation of humans". By this they mean not only a technical extension and perfection of the human senses, but also a kind of humanisation of machines. The future vision of this movement is: "cyborgs should take the place of humans" ([zukunftsinstitut.de](https://www.zukunftsinstitut.de), 8.5.2021). According to this perspective, today's human being is a discontinued model, an intermediate stage of evolution.

In order to prepare society for this technological change in good time, the Transhumanist Party of Germany (TPD) has drawn up a ten-point programme. It reads like a wish list of all parties represented in the Bundestag, which means it gives itself a modern, participatory, liberal, social and ecological coating in order to finally convey the decisive demand: Animal testing should be replaced by the cultivation of human tissue and "fundamental rights to life, liberty and physical integrity should be extended to certain non-human life, such as animals and artificial intelligence" (AI, TPD, 8.7.2021). This opens the door to genetic research as it is only possible in China so far. For some years now there have been experiments with hybrids between humans and animals (chimeras) to grow organs ([tagesspiegel.de](https://www.tagesspiegel.de), 5.8.2019).

If the Transhumanist Party has its way, not only the invention of chimeras and machine people is on the agenda, but also their legal equality.

Figure 13

Monika Ritzer:

### The theory of mass paranoia and the ego model in the works of Hermann Broch

"On the basis of this motivation, all human action is directed towards the establishment of states of value: It aims at ego-development or self-assertion through the appropriation of the external world in symbolic or concrete form, whereby Broch tends to distinguish between three groups of motives. The first involves the practical mastery of the world, which can range from the intake of food to possession and the exercise of power; the second concerns the intellectual appropriation of the world through knowledge, the third social relations such as the emotional expansion through affiliation (friendship, love) or an intoxicating sense of community. [...]

The opposite pole to such ego expansion is ego narrowing. Where the ego loses its values, be it through repression or withdrawal, it suffers an emotionally destabilising reduction that Broch explains as existential. Every loss of freedom, status or property becomes 'a symbol of approaching death' and is thus accompanied by states of fear (KW 12, 47). Fear increases in stress, i.e. in an acute state of deprivation of value, which can be triggered by internal (grief) as well as external, such as economic crises (inflation, unemployment), to panic, which gets its emotional virulence of the feeling of existential insecurity – 'Panic is the outbreak of that metaphysical primordial fear, which corresponds to the innate loneliness of every soul' – and becomes relevant to the mass psychology when the individual tries to compensate for this deficit of values in the collective; [...]

The sign of the change from community to mass is rational impoverishment: The individual lacks, loses or renounces his intellectual and moral personality values, i.e. spirit, will and responsibility. [...] In principle, Broch sees his criticism of the spiritual vacuum of modernity confirmed by Fa-schism. The 20th century shows terribly 'the flimsiness of the alleged individualism', which had no substance and therefore produced unstable and easily collectivised egos. (KW 12, 136).

Source: Monika Ritzer, in: Massenwahntheorie. 3.1.1 Das Ich-Modell, in: Hermann-Broch-Handbuch, Berlin 2016, p. 433-460, p. 441f. [Translation and highlighting blue: S.R.].



The social consequences of such a demand are currently unpredictable. But one thing can already be said: The humanisation of AI remains a façade behind which the elite will rule the world of tomorrow all the more easily, an elite of around 2,000 dollar billionaires who, according to a study by the Swiss bank UBS, have become even richer through the growth of the technology industry and healthcare during the Corona Crisis ([dw.com, 7.10.2020](https://www.dw.com/de/7.10.2020)). The future leadership could therefore let humans be ruled by "intelligent" machines. Considerations of incorporating AI into political decision-making processes are a step in this direction. Programmers are already working on a corresponding "algorithmic social contract" ([medium.com, 13.8.2016](https://www.medium.com/13.8.2016)). The statement of the transhumanists that machines will not "take over the world" ([zukunftsinstitut.de, 8.5.2021](https://www.zukunftsinstitut.de/8.5.2021)), is therefore probably true, but only half the truth.

Nevertheless, research funds are currently being invested to examine whether the networking of large computing systems and possibly human brains can create "super-intelligences" or "strong AI" that are completely beyond human control. Some IT specialists claim that such a development is inevitable, that humanity is sliding straight into such a disaster ([Alfonseca u.a. 2016](https://www.alfonseca.de/2016)). Accordingly, the research should contribute to clarifying the question of whether and how such super brains can be tamed. Karsten Wendland from the University of Karlsruhe proposes appropriate protective measures: "I like to say that artificial intelligence should be kept in a cage, so that it doesn't brush out at some point." ([swr.de, 22.1.2021](https://www.swr.de/22.1.2021)) But what makes us so sure that this has not already happened? Should a super-intelligence take control of the earth, they will certainly not forget to keep humans in ignorance about it. We would not even notice if and when this takeover takes place.

More productive, on the other hand, is a discussion of the question of what distinguishes humans from machines and whether technology is actually capable of closing this "gap" one day. Hermann Broch's ego model points to an important distinguishing feature, namely the human being's "state of values" or his value horizon. He differentiates between intellectual values on the individual level and moral values that stand in a social context. In the process of experiencing an "ego narrowing" through "repression or deprivation", these values are gradually lost. Mental creativity, willpower and a sense of responsibility diminish. In other words, his thinking and acting are reduced to the level of a machine, he becomes one-dimensional, capable only of reproduction and obedience. He experiences the complex so-

ciety as an amorphous mass whose political control he no longer sees through and therefore runs along with it, is absorbed in it. He adapts because he is no longer aware of the responsibility of his actions. If the majority of the population is gradually seized by such a loss of values and dehumanised, in the end soulless existences will dominate public discourse. When a society no longer distinguishes between fiction and truth ([tages-spiegel.de, 23.4.2021](https://www.tages-spiegel.de/23.4.2021), [allesdichtmachen](https://www.allesdichtmachen.de/)) and does not tolerate criticism ([br.de, 11.2.2021](https://www.br.de/11.2.2021)), it has already taken such a direction of development: The loss of values of a democratic and open society shows itself in the lack of pluralism, tolerance and the ability to dialogue.

Figure 14

**Hans Halvorson,**

Professor of Philosophy, Princeton University:

### Meta-thinking

By any reasonable definition of "thinking," I suspect that computers do indeed think. But if computers think, then thinking isn't the unique province of human beings. Is there something else about humans that makes us unique? [...]

*What sets human beings apart from the current generation of thinking machines is that humans are capable of thinking about thinking, and of rejecting their current way of thinking if it isn't working for them.*

[...] Can we construct machines that not only think, but that engage in "meta-thought," i.e. thinking about thinking? One intriguing possibility is that for a machine to think about thinking, it will need to have something like free will. And another intriguing possibility is that we are on the verge of constructing machines with free will, namely quantum computers. [...] (*Existing computers do precisely this: they think within a system.*) On the other hand, one can reason "about the system," e.g. by asking whether there are enough rules to deduce all logical consequences of the theory. *This latter activity is typically called meta-logic, and is a paradigm instance of meta-thought. It is thinking about the system as opposed to within the system.*

But I'm interested in yet another instance of meta-thought: if you've adopted a theory, then you've adopted a language and some deduction rules. But you're free to abandon that language or those rules, if you think that a different theory would suit your purposes better. We haven't yet built a machine that can do this sort of thing, i.e. evaluate and choose among systems. Why not? *Perhaps choosing between systems requires free will, emotions, goals, or other things that aren't intrinsic to intelligence per se. Perhaps these further abilities are something that we don't have the power to confer on inanimate matter.*

Source: Hans Halvorson, Meta-thinking, in: John Brockman (Ed.), What to Think about Machines That Think: Today's Leading Thinkers on the Age of Machine Intelligence, New York, 6.10.2015, 576 p.; electronic version, 16.5.2016, p. 233. [Italics in text, highlighting blue: S.R.]

Conversely, according to Hermann Broch, it can be predicted that people will regain their dignity when they free themselves from this ego narrowness and open up and expand their personalities. He has to re-appropriate the outside world, be it through material possessions (consumption), an intellectual engagement (criticism) or an emotional opening through social interaction (instead of social distancing). These are skills that no artificial intelligence possesses, but only human beings with their cultural and humanistic values. The key to exiting the prison of the Corona pandemic lies in the hand of humans themselves, in their ego expansion, which elevates them above all machines and makes them feel unique.

Once this has begun, many paths to the realisation of humanist ideals are open. For the young generation with an affinity for technology, we recommend an anthology by renowned scientists who have commented on the topic of AI ([Brockman 2016](#)). In it, Hans Halvorson, a professor of philosophy at Princeton University, describes as the unique ability of humans to mentally enter an extended dimension, a meta-level, and think about systems and their rules ([Halvorson 16.5.2016: 233](#), cf. Figure 14). From this perspective, they can judge these rules, consider them as good or even change them if they bring more harm than good to them and society.

## 7. Conclusion: The Corona Crisis Calls for a Multidimensional Social Theory

If humans differ from machines in their ability to think multidimensionally, then analyses of the human sciences should always take a multidimensional perspective. So far, this has rarely been the case. The struggle for the role of the "dominant doctrine", which is accepted, applied and taught by a majority of the respective discipline, still dominates ([juwiss.de, 17.10.2013](#)). In contrast, the present article shows how fruitful a change of perspective can be in terms of broadening knowledge, especially when it transcends narrowly defined disciplinary boundaries. In the present case, a meta-theoretical approach was taken to the analysis of the Corona policy and its measures. Different criteria speak for the theories in question, such as the *topicality and relevance* of an approach (e.g. MMT and transhumanism), *the revival and transfer* of an older theory to current developments (e.g. structural analysis of the Nazi regime and bio-power) as well as terms and theories that *simulate a scientific nature* and serve manipulation (e.g. 'conspiracy theory' and Maoism or its cultural revolution).

Of course, far more approaches could be considered. But this should be left to other researchers. This contribution is intended as a first impulse for social scientists to overcome their speechlessness in the current Corona crisis. After one year, it is time to start scientific discourse on how democratic societies can regain their lost humanistic values. In this sense, the following summarising theses have been deliberately sharpened in order to provoke contradiction and awareness.

### "Conspiracy theories" (of the media)

- ♦ The term "conspiracy theory" is an external description and always used by an outside person in order to cast doubt on claims and to exclude their authors from the discourse. That is why this term is often used to discredit and expose.
- ♦ It is a creation of media language and is not used in any scientific discipline. A free research culture, on the other hand, thrives on the pluralism of theories and the competition of approaches. The accusation particularly applies to political science, which analyses open and hidden interests.
- ♦ The case of Roland Wiesendanger shows the dubious methods with which he and his laboratory hypothesis on Covid-19 were defamed (through false statements, defamation, exclusion). They belonged to the strategy of "decomposition" of the state security of the former GDR.
- ♦ In this case, journalists violated the press code and thereby showed their real interest, namely to ban explosive topics from public discourse. It is about the proposal to outlaw gain-of-function research on biological warfare agents worldwide.

### Maoism and the Chinese Cultural Revolution

- ♦ The World Health Organisation (WHO) accuses China of withholding important data from the international commission *investigating the four hypotheses of origin*. Beijing defends *the assumption that Covid-19 was imported through frozen food*. It sees itself in the competition of political systems and presents its authoritarian Corona policy as exemplary.
- ♦ Behind the facade of "successful" anti-Corona measures are *methods of a totalitarian political system*. This is indicated by the Communist Party's (CPC) absolute claim to leadership in the economy and society. Despite all reforms, *critics of the dominant role of the state economy are punished and "re-educated"* (Constitution 1985, Article 28).

- ♦ To justify the drastic measures such as compulsory vaccinations, the government draws on the **Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)**. But unlike Mao, who incited young Red Guards to take violent actions against regime critics, Xi Jinping relies on structural violence. **Since 2015, a social credit system has been used for control and moral education.**
- ♦ Just as the regime quarantined the Hubei region for 12 weeks on 23.1.2020, it declared the pandemic to be over in October 2020. The screening programme in Wuhan with about 10 million people showed that **the risk of infection by people without symptoms is low**. China is currently using this finding to catch up economically.

### Modern Monetary Theory (MMT)

- ♦ Before the Corona crisis, MMT led a niche existence. **Only with the worsening of the money shortage in the Corona crisis does it receive greater attention.** It contributed to the polarisation in the election campaign for the US presidency because **the Democrats opened up to MMT**. Under Joe Biden, the national debt once again rose to the record sum of 28 trillion US dollars.
- ♦ The central message of MMT is that **a sovereign state with its own currency could print unlimited amounts of money** to finance necessary expenses. The dangers of inflation could be controlled by increasing taxes or cutting spending. This message appeals to all strata of constituencies and is particularly tempting for politicians before elections.
- ♦ **Immediately at the beginning of the Corona crisis, the European Central Bank (ECB) adopted the MMT.** Contrary to the EU treaties, it takes on debts in order to distribute the aid money among the member states. However, **according to the MMT, this would require a common EU fiscal policy.** This deficit will increasingly cause controversy in the EU.
- ♦ The MMT can only be useful for the USA because the dollar is the world's reserve currency. **For the EU and for the emerging countries, the fiscal dependencies increase.** Europe would do well to trust its historical experience. **The controversy between liberals (Mises) and etatists (Knapp as the mastermind of MMT) is more topical than ever.**

### Structural analysis (Ernst Fraenkel):

- ♦ The structural analysis by Ernst Fraenkel, the founder of political science in Germany, **describes the ruling system of National Socialism**

**as a dual state:** In addition to the *normative state* as the executive branch of the legal system and administration, the NSDAP established a parallel *state of instrumental measures*, which ruled with violence and arbitrariness as the "organ of the NS dictatorship".

- ♦ This approach can be used to analyse authoritarian rule structures in order to identify dangers of anti-democratic developments. If one follows this model, the Treaty on the **European Stability Mechanism (ESM, 2012)** has created a *structure of instrumental measures outside of the EU Treaty and national law* in addition to the European *normative structure*.
- ♦ The signatory states of the ESM, the Eurogroup or EU19 with the euro as their currency, reject the European Commission's proposal to convert the ESM into EU law. **Instead, this mechanism** (according to Fraenkel, the structure of instrumental measures) **should be available to the entire EU27, but without jurisdiction and democratic control.**
- ♦ Before Austria and Italy (EU19) first resorted to the lockdown in the Corona crisis, **the President of the ESM Board of Governors (Eurogroup) announced that the stability criteria would be suspended (4.3.2020).** The Eurogroup took this decision after a conference call during which neither risks nor alternative measures were discussed. **It gave the starting signal for a debt spiral.**

### The Bio-Power Approach (Michel Foucault).

- ♦ At the end of 2020, the European Commission proposed the establishment of a **European Health Union** to combat the pandemic. In contrast to the ESM, this project is supposed to be subject to EU law, but **shift competences in health policy from the country level to Brussels.** It is about the management and control of all health data in the EU.
- ♦ This shift of competence contradicts the EU treaties (principle of subsidiarity) as well as data protection and the fundamental right to informational self-determination. According to Michel Foucault's approach to bio-politics, Union citizens are threatened with **an unbounded and uncontrollable bio-power, according to which it is no longer doctors but politicians who distinguish between sick and healthy.**
- ♦ Foucault describes **two extreme poles of the expansion of power.** One extreme is the decision-making power **to wipe out the life of all of humanity** (atomic bomb), the other **to determine the life of humanity** by using technology.

gies. According to Foucault, the Nazi regime represented both extremes and is a cautionary example.

- ◆ After the experiences of the Nazi dictatorship, doctors drafted the **Nuremberg Code (1947)**, which prohibits testing medicines on humans. **The EU (EMA) seems to evade this by allowing vaccines already after shortened test phases** that result in side effects and deaths. Union citizens are insufficiently informed about the risks.

#### Antihuman Vision of **Transhumanism**

- ◆ At present, **the vaccine manufacturers are increasingly pointing to regular follow-ups**. Together with the indirect compulsion to vaccinate through the withdrawal of basic rights, there is a threat of a whole society becoming addicted to medication. Like experiences with addicts, **secondary diseases and mental disorders are to be expected**, which hinder a self-determined life.
- ◆ According to the world view of the **transhumanists**, such a development is not a curse but a blessing. **They strive for a transformation of the human being into a cybernetic organism**, a hybrid of human and machine, and demand their legal equality. The breeding of hybrid beings from humans and animals would also serve evolutionary progress.
- ◆ **Such biopolitical objectives recall the research of the Nazi regime**. Not only Michel Foucault dealt with this, but also **the writer Hermann Broch**. In his analyses of mass paranoia, he describes processes of ego narrowing through permanent fear and control, which are always accompanied by a painful loss of value.
- ◆ At the same time, Broch outlined the way out of a social depression, such as the Corona crisis: **the individual regains his dignity when he frees himself from the narrowing of the ego**. He must reappropriate the outside world through material possessions (consumption), **intellectual debate (criticism) or emotional openness (instead of social distancing)**.

#### Conclusion: **Multidimensional Social Theory**

- ◆ Humanism assumes that humans differ from machines through **feelings, willpower, purposefulness and through his ability to think multidimensionally**. Accordingly, analyses of the human sciences should always open up a multidimensional perspective through appropriate approaches beyond their narrow subject boundaries.

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